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A HISTORY

OF THE

TOWN OF FLATBUSH, N. Y.

BY

REV. ROBERT G. STRONG.

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BROOKLYN, N. Y.

1884.

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HISTORY

OF THE

TOWN OF FLATBUSH.

By REV.



A. M.

THE BEGINNINGS of Settlement of the towns upon the west end of Long Island are somewhat difficult to define. The English, who settled its eastern extremity, came mostly in groups, or colonies, from Connecticut or from the Massachusetts Bay, with well defined religious or temporal motives, and frequently with previously-perfected church and political organizations. On the contrary, the Dutch, although naturally clannish, seem to have wandered to the western shore of Long Island, from their first settlement at New Amsterdam, mostly as individual settlers. For purposes of mutual protection, readiness of retreat, and nearness to a market for their farm-produce, they secured farms along the shore, until the whole shore, from the Waale-boght to the ocean at Gravesend, was taken up. Not until then did they venture further inland; and we find patents granted, one after another, for Breuckelen, for Gravesend; then for Amersfort or Flatlands.

Soon, the hardy Dutch farmers discovered that the lands in, or near, the woods covering the ridge north of Amersfort, and extending a mile or more to the south, were more fertile than those upon the open flats between s'Gravesende and Amersfort. That the settlement of the town was begun in this manner, *from the south*, and not, as has been generally supposed, from the north, by persons moving over the hill from Breuckelen, is evident from the following fact: that we learn of no purchases of farms at Breuckelen at any distance back from the river, towards the hills and woods of Flatbush. Again, the first deed of land here, dated June 6, 1636, is for a tract at the *southern* boundary of the present village, conveyed by the Indians to Andries Hudden and Wolphert Gerritsen, and called "The Little Flats." Another deed was given, about the same time, to Wouter Van Twiller, the Director, for land in the same vicinity, called "Twiller's Flats." These three tracts lie partly in Flatbush and partly in Flatlands. But the earliest deed to land *within* the bounds of the present town is to Jacobus Van Corlaer, for a tract in its south-

easterly corner, designated as "Corlaer's Flats." This view is fortified by the facts: that the largest proportion of old houses were in the southern and central portion of the village; and that the road over the hill to Breuckelen was through a continuous and dense forest—being, in fact, little more than a crooked Indian-trail. If we consider that, even in later times, this road afforded a most difficult route over which the farmers of the villages south of Brooklyn were obliged to haul their produce to market, it is evident that, in the earlier times, household goods, farm-produce, etc., could only have been conveyed, to and from Flatbush, either by boat to Gravesend Bay; or, by the "shore-road," to Gravesend; and thence to Amersfort. Even sixty-one years after (1697–80), as we learn from the *Journal of the Labadists*, Jasper Dankers and Peter Shuyter, this road was a wretched one. "Taking our leave [we] rode on to 'tVlacke Bos, a village situated about an hour and a half's distance from there, upon the same plain, which is very large. This village seems to have better farms than the bay [Flatlands], and yields fully as much revenue. Riding through it, we came to the woods and hills, which are *very stony and uncomfortable* to ride over." But still stronger proof is found in the fact stated by these travellers, that, when they started out from Breuckelen, they reached s' Gravesende by *following the line of the shore*; which we believe to have been the *earliest*, the most traveled, and the *best* route for reaching the interior villages; thence they continued their journey to Amersfort and 't Vlacke Bos.

Houses were probably erected and lands cultivated before any formal deeds or patents were procured from the Indians, or the Director at Nieuw Amsterdam. New Amersfort (Flatlands) was undoubtedly first settled in 1624; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that, within the four or five years ensuing, settlers began to clear the woods and locate in the more fertile lands at 't Vlacke Bos, or Midwout—the settlement of which we may, therefore, safely place at 1630–34. But, although the last of the five county-towns to be

settled, Flatbush was the third to procure a town-patent from the Director. This was in 1651, and the tract of land (the title of which had undoubtedly been secured from the Indians by purchase, on the part of the West India Company—as was their invariable custom), for which the patent was granted, was bounded north by the hills, and on the south by Amersfort (Flatlands), being one unbroken stretch of dense forest. The eastern and western boundaries of this patent were probably coincident with those of what was afterwards called “the Old Town.” The original Dutch patent is not in existence, and was probably destroyed in 1684*; when, in common with those of the other county-towns (except Gravesend, which, as an English settlement, was exempted), it was “called in” by Gov. Nicolls, who was then granting new, or confirmatory, charters. Dr. STRONG, in his *History of Flatbush*, says that the *only original Dutch patent of any part of the town*, which has been discovered, is a “Ground Brief or Patent” issued by Gov. Stuyvesant to the “indwellers and inhabitants of Midwout” for the Canarsie Meadows, therein described as “a parcel of meadow-ground, or valley, lying on the east north-east of the Canarsie Indian planting-grounds.” According to HENRY C. MURPHY, the original patentees, to whom Stuyvesant granted the patent of 1651, were Jan Snedecor, Arent Van Hatten, a burgomaster of Nieuw Amsterdam, and Johannes Megapolensis, one of the ministers of the same city.

The first houses and settlements were probably in the most southerly portion of the present village; along the “Indian-path” from New Amersfort to the Hills—now the direct road, through the village, from Flatlands to Brooklyn. We have but little positive knowledge concerning the number, or the names, of the first settlers; or the locations secured by them during the seventeen years elapsing between the first purchase of 1634, and the patent of 1651. But, Dr. Strong states that, after the patent of 1651, “farms were laid out into 48 lots, or tracts of land, extending 600 Dutch rods east and west on each side of the Indian-path, and having severally an average width of 27 rods.” Those on the east side ran east to west; those on the west side had a south-westerly inclination, corresponding with the direction of the Hills on the north-west of the town. Each one of the proprietors named in the patent received (in distribution *by lot*—the invariable custom of the Dutch in the division of patented lands) two or more lots apiece, while the central and most eligible lots were reserved for the church. A considerable portion of wood lands lying on the west, north and east sides of the town, together with Corlaer’s and Twiller’s Flats, were left in Common, and remained undivided for years.

Early Boundary Disputes with Flatlands.—Although the Indian title to these lands had been

carefully extinguished, and purchases confirmed with patents from the Dutch and English Governors, the settlers of Flatbush met with trouble from their Amersfort neighbors, about certain lands along the boundary-line between the two towns. Especially was this the case upon the Canarsie meadows, at that time highly esteemed by the Dutch farmers; and, finally, in 1666, arbitrators, appointed by Gov. Nicolls, made a survey, approved by the Governor, April 20, 1667, by which the lines were carefully defined by marked trees, stakes and fence. And the Flatbush people then received the following confirmatory patent:

“RICHARD NICOLLS, Esq., &c. * * * Whereas there is a certain town within this government, known by the name of Midwout alias Flatbush &c. * * * Now, for the confirmation. &c. Know ye that I have given, ratified, confirmed and granted unto Mr. Johannes Megapolensis, one of the Ministers of this City, Mr. Cornelius Van Ruyven, one of the Justices of the Peace, Adrian Hegeman, Jan Snediger, Jan Stryker, Frans Barents Pastor, Jacob Stryker, and Cornelius Janse Bougaert, as Patentees, for and in behalf of themselves and associates, freeholders and inhabitants of the said town, their heirs, successors and assigns; All that tract, together with several parcels of land, which already have or shall hereafter be purchased or procured for, or on behalf of the said town; whether from the native Indian proprietors or others, within the bounds and limits hereafter set forth and expressed, viz: That is to say, The said Town is bounded to the North by the Hills, to the South by the fence lately sett between them and the town of Amersfort alias Flatland.” Then, with mention of the stakes and land-marks, the deed closes with “which said meadows were upon the 20 of April last, by common consent staked out, and by my approbation allowed of; All which said tracts and parcels of land, meadow-ground &c. * * * Dated, Oct. 11, 1667.”

The security afforded to the Flatbush settlers by this patent was, however, of short duration; for, in 1670, *Eskemoppas*, Sachem of Rockaway, with his brothers *Kinnarimas* and *Ahawaham*, with evil intent, claimed the land, demanding that payment therefor should be made to themselves as the *original* Indian owners, and denying the right of the Canarsies to deed it to the settlers. Although this claim was fraudulent, yet, to avoid the ill-will, annoyance, distress and expense to which its refusal might give rise, the Flatbush people accepted a deed from *Eskemoppas* and brothers, for which they paid a valuable consideration. The deed is as follows:

“To all Christian people to whom this present writing shall come; *Eskemoppas*, Sachem of Rockaway, upon Long Island, *Kinnarimas* and *Ahawaham* his brothers, send greeting: Whereas they, the said Sachem *Eskemoppas*, and his two brothers afore mentioned, do lay claim to the land now in the tenure and occupation of the inhabitants of Midwout, alias Flatbush, as well as other lands adjacent thereto as the right born Indian owners and proprietors thereof: Know ye that in consideration of certain sums of seewant, a certain sum of wampum and divers other goods (hereinafter specified) unto the said Sachem and his brothers in hand paid, and received, from Adrian Hegeman, Jacob Stryker, Hendrick Jorise and Jan Hansen, for and on behalf of themselves and the rest of the inhabitants of Midwout alias Flatbush, the receipt whereof

* Land was sold, in 1653, by Edward Griffen to Peter Loot. Griffen must have had a clear title from some patent, granted by some one at an earlier date.

they do hereby acknowledge, and themselves to be fully satisfied and paid: Have given granted contracted and sold * * * All that said parcel of land where the said town of Midwout stands, together with all the lands lying therein, stretching on the east side to the limits of Newtown and Jamaica, on the south side to the meadow ground, and limits of Amersfort; on the west side to the bounds of Gravesend and New Utrecht, and on the north side along the Hills; that is to say, all those lands within the limits above mentioned &c. * * * In witness whereof, the parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals this 20th day of April, in the 22nd year of his Majesty's reign, in the year of our Lord 1670.

ESKEMOPPAS £ Mark. (seal).

KINNARIMAS & Mark. (seal).

AHAWAHAM f Mark (seal).

Signed and delivered in the presence of

THOMAS LOVELACE.

CORNELIUS VAN RUYVEN.

Recorded the day and year within written

per MATHIAS NICHOLS, *Secretary*.

The consideration agreed upon in the purchase herein mentioned was as follows viz: 10 Fathoms of black seawant; 10 Fathoms of white seawant; 5 Match coats of Duffells; 4 Blankets; 2 Gunners sight Guns; 2 Pistols; 5 Double handfulls of Powder [Gispen bunches of Powder]; 5 Bars of Lead; 10 Knives; 2 Secret Aprons of Duffell [Cuppas of Duffell]; 1 Half vat or half barrell of Strong Beer; 3 Cans of Brandy; 6 Shirts. All the above particulars were received by the Sachem and his ten brothers, in the presence of the persons under written, as witnesses hereof.

John Manning.

Sylvester Salisbury.

John Hough.

Jacob Van Cortlandt.*

Tennis Jacob Hay.*

Edward Carlisle.*

Acknowledged before me, the Sachem and his two brothers, and the goods delivered in my presence, the day and year within written.

FRANCIS LOVELACE."

In this deed we find, for the first time, the *eastern* and *western* boundary-lines of the town definitely laid down; and it is probable that the difficulty with *Eskemoppas*, concerning the right to the lands within the town of Flatbush, related especially to the *eastern* section of the town. While it is well established that the western portion of the town was purchased from and deeded by the Canarsie Indians, in 1651, the time of purchase of the eastern section cannot with any degree of certainty be fixed. No deed has been found, earlier than this one from Eskemoppas, in that section of the town extending from Keuter's Hook to the Jamaica line. It is possible that, the boundary lines being indistinct or poorly defined, the Flatbush people may have attempted to settle farther to the east than warranted by the limits of the original deed; and that the land thus occupied was truly the property of the Rockaway Indians. However this may be, we find, from the time of this deed, 1670, the western section of the town, as far as Keuter's Hook, is called the *Old Town*; and the portion beyond, as far as the eastern boundary, at the Jamaica line, is called the *New Lands*,

or "the *New Lots*." The original name of this tract was *Oostwoud*, or "East Woods."

Settlements were soon made on this section, by persons from Flatbush; and, about this time also, "several of the inhabitants of Midwout, or Flatbush, removed to New Jersey, and formed settlements on the Raritan at Milstone."—(*Strong*.) In proof that 1670 is the true date of the *first settlement of that portion of the town of Flatbush called the New Lots*, we notice that, five years after, when settlers began to appropriate the land thus secured by deed from Eskemoppas, there appeared another claimant, Capt. Richard Betts, who endeavored to establish a claim to a portion of the tract by virtue of a deed which he professed to hold, bearing date of 1663. The matter was tried (on an appeal by the town of Flatbush from the Court of Sessions) at the General Court of Assizes; which, in 1675, in the city of New York, and, after a fair hearing, ordered as follows: "That the land shall lye in common to Flatbush, and towns adjacent, as it heretofore hath been, and that the towns who have the benefit of the commonage shall pay their equal proportion of the purchase money to the Indians and cost of this suite." From this it is evident that the validity of a deed of earlier date than 1670 was not admitted. After this suit, however, the inhabitants deemed it prudent to obtain a separate patent for the *New Lots*, which, according to Dr. Strong, was granted by Gov. Andros, March 25, 1677, to Arian Lamberse and others, to the number of thirty-five persons. This patent is not now extant. The boundary-line between Flatbush and Amersfort seems to have been a source of frequent trouble between the two villages. The first difficulty was settled by the deed of Gov. Richard Nicolls, bearing date of 1667. Two years after, however, complaint was made by the inhabitants of Amersfort that those of Flatbush were not observing the terms of the patent granted in 1667. The matter was tried before the Court of Sessions at Gravesend, and a new agreement made, dated May 11, 1677. Two years later, June, 1679, complaint was again made to the Court against the inhabitants of Flatbush for trespass. A record of the Court of Sessions, held at Gravesend, June, 1679, relates to this matter, as follows, viz.:

"The inhabitants of flatlands complainyng that the inhabitants of flatbush have trespassed upon the land belonging to flatlands aforesaid, contrary to an award made and agreed upon between both towns, and an order of the Court punctually to observe the same, which being proved by the constable and one of the overseers of flatlands, aforesaid, and they not appearing to answer the complaint, and for their contempt in not observing the said award and order of the Court. The Court orders, that the said inhabitants shall pay as a fine to the publique, the sum of ten pounds and to observe the said order of Court. They also complainyng that the inhabitants of flatbush have chopt of the marke of a tree, &c. To be deferred to the next Court of Sessions, and they to have notice of it to answer the same."

* These are supposed to have been Judges, or Justices of the Peace.

A similar dispute arose in 1683. While this controversy was being carried on about the southern boundary, another arose between Brooklyn and Flatbush about the north boundary-line, which heretofore, in all deeds and patents, had been designated as "the Hills." The authorities of the village of Brooklyn, in 1678, insisted that the term "to the Hills" should be construed so as to include the southern base of the hills. Those of Flatbush, however, contended that their patent embraced all the land to the *crest* of the hills, arguing that Brooklyn's construction of the terms of the patent would deprive them of all their rights; since the base of the hills might be made to mean until the land became perfectly level. Since the land from the immediate foot of the hills slopes gradually to the southern boundary of the town, and even to the sea, this claim of Brooklyn to the land on the southern slope of the hills could not with safety be entertained a moment, lest at some future time they should desire to claim a right to the whole town. The matter was therefore submitted to the Court of Sessions at Gravesend; and December 18, 1678, the court decided that the whole dispute be referred to Captain Jaques Cortelyou and Captain Richard Stillwell, who should make a survey of the land and run a boundary-line. Their "report was ordered to be determinative." Five years afterward they reported that they had performed this duty, "and have marked the trees betwixt towne and towne."

DR. STRONG states that "One of the trees thus marked by these arbitrators was a large white oak, standing near what is called the Port Road, and mentioned afterwards in the patent granted by Governor Dongan as one of the boundaries of the town. This tree remained until the time of the Revolutionary war, when it was cut down by the Americans and fallen across the road to intercept the British. A red free-stone monument, with a proper inscription, was subsequently set up near the stump of this tree by General Jeremiah Johnson, on the part of Brooklyn, and John C. Vanderveer, Esq., on the part of Flatbush."

The precise point at which this tree stood, and where the monument was afterward placed, is now embraced in Prospect Park. It is about one hundred and fifty feet down the road, south-east of the bronze slab containing the inscription of the battle of Long Island. At the time of the Revolutionary war, the road at this point ran through a narrow pass, between the hills, one of which still remains as it then was, and is on the east side of the road. The face of the other, next the road, on the west side, was destroyed by constant excavations to procure the excellent sand of which it was composed. Between these two hills, which were in former times separated at their base by a space of thirty or forty feet, ran the road from Flatbush to Brooklyn. The tree stood at the eastern base of the hill, on the north side of the road.

In after years a toll-gate was placed just south of this spot. In the gutter at the north-west end of the toll-house, and about fifty feet from the base of the hill,

the red free-stone monument was placed, the letter F being cut on one side and upon the other the letter B, indicating, no doubt, Flatbush and Brooklyn. In the lapse of years, the wash from the road and hill gradually covered up this stone; and, at the time the ground was purchased for the park it was completely covered with sand. The grade of the Park road has no doubt buried it two feet or more beneath the surface, where in all probability it would now be found.

This report of the commissioners, Cortelyou and Stillwell, was *not* accepted as "determinative," as the court ordered. The next year new trouble arose in reference to the boundary. Philip Wells and Jacobus Cortland were appointed surveyors by the two towns.

They reported "that the line run formerly by Capt. Jacques Cortelyou and Mr. Stillwell is right and Just."

After several subsequent disputes, the difficulty was finally adjusted on the following basis, viz.:

"That the summit of the hills, or the first perceptible southerly declivity of any hill, should be deemed and taken as the fixed and determined line, and wherever the hills are cut off or interrupted by an intervening valley or hollow, the boundary line should extend in the shortest possible direction, from the summit of one hill to that of the opposite one. In conformity with this determination, proper monuments have been placed on the boundary lines, to prevent, if possible, all further mistakes."

Flatbush, occupying a central position, was bounded on all sides by the other towns, which accounts for the numerous conflicts in reference to boundary-lines.

Boundary Dispute with Newtown.—The last, and by far the most prolonged controversy, of this kind, was that concerning the north-eastern boundary-line. It began in 1706, when the inhabitants of Newtown claimed part of the lands embraced in the Flatbush patent for the New Lots. At this time a fund was raised, by tax, upon every patentee, to pay expenses in defending their boundary-line; and, at the annual town-meetings, two officers were chosen, whose duty it was to guard the interest of the town, to "their meets and bounds," according to the patent. The Dutch called these men "*Dorps mannen*," or *towns-men*. Afterward the English designated them the "Defenders of the Patent." For fifteen years the controversy was prolonged, being finally settled in 1721, and was the last serious trouble concerning the boundary-lines of the town.

The Dongan Charter, 1685.—The last patent or confirmatory deed for the town was issued by the Governor, Colonel Thomas Dongan, in compliance with a request of the inhabitants for a patent for the whole town which should include all the former separate grants or deeds. These several patents had been granted at different times for *Flacke Bos*, Midwout or Flatbush; for the Canarsie Meadows; Kenter's Hook; *Eastwoudt*, and *Oostwoudt*, or the New Lots. The patent, dated Nov. 12, 1685, is as follows:

"THOMAS DONGAN, Lieutenant-Governor and Vice-Admiral

of New York, &c., under his Majesty James the Second, by the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c., Supreme Lord and Proprietor of the Colony and Prince of New York and its dependencies in America. To all to whom these presents shall come, sendeth Greeting: Whereas, there is a certain town in Kings County, upon Long Island, called and known by the name of Midwout, alias Flatbush, the bounds whereof begin at the mouth of the Fresh-Kill, and so along by a certain ditch which lies betwixt Amersfoot and Flatbush Meadows, and so running along the ditch and fence to a certain white-oak marked tree, and from thence upon a straight line to the westernmost point of a small island of woodland lying before John Stryker's bridge; and from thence with a straight line to the north-west hook or corner of the ditch of John Oakie's meadow, and from thence along the said ditch and fence to the swamp of the Fresh-Kill, and so along the swamp and hollow of the aforesaid Kill to the land of Keuter's Hook: thence along the same to a white-oak tree; from thence with a straight line to a black-oak marked tree standing upon the north-east side of Twiller's Flats, having a small snip of flats upon the south-east side of the line; and so from thence to a white-oak tree standing on the west side of Moschito Hole to a small island, leaving a snip of flats in the Flatlands bounds; and from thence to a certain marked tree or stump standing upon the highway which goes to Flatlands, upon the Little Flats, about twenty rods from Flatbush Lots, and so along the fence six hundred Dutch rods to the corner of Flatbush fence, and so along the rear of the lots to a sassafras-stump standing on Cornelius Jansen Berrian's lot of land; and from thence with a straight line to a certain old marked tree, or stump, standing by the Rush Pond under the hills, and so along upon the south side of the hill till it comes to the west end of Long Hill, and so along upon the south side of the said hill till it comes to the east end of the Long Hill; and then with a straight line from the east end of said Long Hill to a marked white-oak tree standing to the west side of the road, near the place called the gate or port of the hills, and so from the east side of the port or gate aforesaid, upon the south side of the main hills, as far as Brooklyn Patent doth extend, and so along the said hills to the bounds of the Jamaica Patent; and from thence with a southerly line to the kill or creek by the east of Plunder's Neck, and so along the said kill to the sea, as according to the several deeds or purchases from the Indian owners, the Patent from Governor Nicolls, and the award between Brooklyn and the town of Flatbush, relation thereunto being had, doth more fully and at large appear: And, whereas, an application to me hath been made for a confirmation of the aforesaid tracts and parcels of land and premises: Now, Know ye, that by virtue of the commission and authority unto me given by his Majesty, James the Second, by the Grace of God of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, Supreme Lord and Proprietor of the Province of New York, in consideration of the premisses and the quit-rent hereinafter reserved, I have given, granted, ratified and confirmed, and by these presents do give, grant, ratify and confirm unto Cornelius Vauderwyck, John Okie, Joseph Hegeman, Aries Jansen Vauderbilt, Lafford Pieterse, William Guiliamsen, Hendrick Williamse, Arien Ryers, Peter Stryker, John Stryker, John Remsen, Jacob Hendricks, Derick Vandervleet, Hendrick Ryck, Okie Johnson, Daniel Polhamus, Peter Lott,

Cornelius Vauderveer, Derick Johnson Hooglandt, Denise Tennis, John Johnson, Dittinus Lewis Jansen, William Jacobs, Hendrick Hegeman, and Garret Lubbertse, for and on behalf of themselves and their associates, all the freeholders of the said town of Flatbush, and to their heirs and assigns forever, all the before-recited tract and tracts, parcel and parcels, of land and islands within the said bounds and limits, together with all and singular, the woods, underwoods, plains, hills, meadows, pastures, quarries, marshes, waters, lakes, causeways, rivers, beaches, houses, buildings, fishing, hawking, hunting and fowling, with all liberties, privileges, hereditaments and appurtenances to the said tract of land and premises belonging, or in anywise appertaining: To have and to hold, &c. * * * * To be holden of his Majesty in free and common socage according to the tenure of East Greenwich, in the county of Kent, in his Majesty's Kingdom of England. Yielding, rendering and paying therefor, yearly, and every year, at the City of New York, to his Majesty, his heirs or successors, or to his or their officer or officers, as by him or them shall be appointed to receive the same, eighteen bushels of good merchantable wheat, on or before the five and twentieth day of March, yearly, and every year. In Testimony whereof, I have caused these presents to be entered upon record, in the Secretary's office in the said Province, and the seal thereof, have hereunto affixed, and signed with my hand the twelfth day of November, in the first year of his Majesty's reign, Anno Domini, 1685.

THOMAS DONGAN,

FACSIMILES OF THE AUTOGRAPHS OF SOME OF THE PATENTEES OF FLATBUSH, UNDER THE DONGAN CHARTER, OF 1685.

Hayndryck Reycke

HAYNDRYCK REYCKE, the ancestor of the SUYDAM Family of Kings County.

Cornelis Jansse Vander Veer

CORNELIS JANSSE VANDER VEER, the ancestor of the Vanderveer Family of Kings County.

Jan Strycker

JAN STRYCKER, the ancestor of the Stryker Family of Kings County.

Leffert Pieterse

LEFFERT PIETERSEN, (van Haughwout, North Holland, 1644) the common ancestor of the Lefferts Family in Kings County.

Adrian Reyerse . 1661

ADRIAN REYERSE, the common ancestor of the Ryerson, the Adrlance and the Martense families.

Peter Lott . 1662.

PETER LOTT, ancestor of the Lott Family of Kings County.

Quit-Rents.—This is the first deed or patent in which any mention is made of any revenue therefrom accruing to the governors. When Dongan entered upon the government of the colony, he found its revenues insufficient to meet its current expenses. With the double intention, therefore, of increasing these revenues, and, at the same time, securing to the inhabitants of the several towns, and to their posterity, an indisputable title to the lands which they had obtained from his predecessors, and by purchase from the Indians; he called in all the patents, and replaced them with new ones. In these new patents he evidently endeavored to secure a greater degree of definiteness in description of boundaries, etc., which had already given rise to innumerable disputes. And the colonists submitted, with apparent willingness, to the change of their deeds, and to the new feature of quit-rent inserted therein. There was, indeed, a protest sent to the English Government by Santin, the collector of New York and a member of the Council (afterward discovered to be a defaulter); but Gov. Dongan's able and manly reply to these charges (*Doc. Hist. N. Y.*, Vol. III, p. 442), sufficiently explains his motives in the matter, and justifies his action.

The quit-rent continued to be paid for several years, according to the requirements of the patent, in good merchantable wheat. At what time the change was made, by which money was accepted in lieu of wheat, we have no means of determining. The Receiver General, at a subsequent date, was authorized to make such a change, and "wheat was valued at eighteen shillings and eight pence a bushel, in New York currency," and rents continued to be paid according to this standard until 1762.

Commutation of Quit-Rents.—After the Revolutionary War an act was passed by the legislature of New York, April 1, 1786, providing for the collection of arrears and the future annual Quit-Rent; and, also, making provision whereby any town might commute for the payment of its quit-rents. In December of this same year the inhabitants of Flatbush availed themselves of the privilege of this act, and purchased a release from future quit-rents, which would have fallen due each year under the terms of their patent.

Dr. STRONG's *History of Flatbush* preserves the re-

ceipt for this release and payment, from which it appears, that its amount (including three years' arrears), from March 25, 1765, to the same date 1786, a period of twenty-one years and nine months (with eight years deducted for "period of Revolution"), was £162, 9s.

Social and Political History.—*Origin of the name.* The early settlers of Breuckelen very naturally termed the densely-wooded hills of Flatbush the "Bosch"—a term equivalent to our word *bush* or *wood*. Following the Indian-path to the top of the ridge, the eye rested upon an unbroken range of level woodland, extending east and west as far as could be seen, and stretching out toward the south for nearly three miles, to the bounds of New Amersfordt. This woodland, covering the extended plain, was called "'t Vlacke Bosch;" i. e., *the flat woods*; "'t Vlacke," or "Vlachte," meaning the plains or flats. In the early Colonial records a similar reference is made to the level *beyond* the woods, which is designated as "'t Vlacke Landts," and embraced, at that time, the towns of New Utrecht, Gravesend, and New Amersfordt. In proof of this we find, in a report of Governor Stuyvesant's, Oct. 19, 1665, this declaration, "*The Flat land ('t Vlacke Landts)*, stripped of inhabitants to such a degree that, with the exception of the three English villages of Hemstedt, New Flushing and Gravesend, there were not fifty boweries or plantations in it," &c.

This term, "'t Vlacke Bosch" was, without doubt, the earliest designation of the wooded country south of "the Hills," and now, for the most part in the Town of Flatbush—and is so used by the Labadist travellers, in 1679-80. This would seem to prove that, even thirty years after the first settlement of the village, the name of the *locality* was a more familiar one to the settlers than the new name—*Middel-Wout* (middle-woods), given it by Gov. Stuyvesant. In the defence of Hendrick Van Dyck, the Fiscal under Stuyvesant, in 1652, he complains that "the Director hath, on his own authority, begun to plant a hamlet in 't Vlacke Bosch [the Flatbush] on Long Island, between Amersfort and Breuckelen. He named it *Middel-Wout*, where Jan Snediker, one of his Selectmen, hath settled." This term appears to be nearly synonymous with the original name of the whole section of woodland. The former term "'t Vlacke Bosch" meaning the *Flat-Wood*, and "Middel-Wout" meaning *Middle-Wood*; "Wout" or "Wout" being the Dutch for *wood*, or *forest*. It was, therefore, undoubtedly, the peculiar surroundings of the locality on which the village was situated, that suggested its name. The name Middel-wout, in common use, gradually became abbreviated to *Mid-wout*, as it is given in the earliest town-records, bearing date 1659. After the surrender of Long Island to the English, we find, for the first time, in public documents, the use of the name Flatbush (Flatbush, Flatbos, Flackbush); a sort of English rendering of the original Dutch "'t Vlacke Bosche." Midwout, however, continued to



be the ordinary appellation in public records and common use, until 1776; the term *Flackebos* being only twice used by Town Clerk Van Ecklen, in 1694-'95. It seems evident, therefore, that the change of name from *Midwont* to *Flatbush*, is the result of no legal enactment, but simply of common usage.

In early times the center of the village was called "*Dorp*," meaning "the town" and here was located the church, the school, and the court-house. North of the "*Dorp*" the land was of a peculiar character, where no rich strata are visible; the roads and fields are covered with immense water-washed cobble-stones. And this is even more observable further north, towards the hills. To this section the early settlers gave the name of *Steen-raap*, or "stone-gathering." Though, to a great extent, these stones have been removed from the surface, still, in digging cellars, and trenches for gas and water mains, large beds of them are yet found, as if piled away by human hands. Still further north, on the sides of "the Hills," were found huge boulders—water-worn—and of which the farmers all through this section of the town used (up to the middle of the present century) to build their farm fences. But, of later years, these boulders have disappeared, having been sold and broken up for building purposes. The Labadist travelers of 1679-80, so often referred to in these pages, have left unequivocal testimony to the then condition of public travel in the county; and within the memory of some still living, these stones and boulders contributed largely to the exceeding roughness of *Flatbush* roads. The soil of that portion of the village lying south of "the *Dorp*" is a sandy loam and remarkably free from stones. The Dutch called it *Rustenburg*, meaning borough, or "resting-place." This name may have been applied in grateful comparison with the state of the roads in other parts of the town and county, over which they were obliged to pass; or, because their homes were here situated, to which they returned for a nightly rest, after their days of severe toil upon their wooded and stony farms in the northern part of the town. According to Mr. TEUNIS G. BERGEN, another portion of the town was called "*East Midwont*," which was, no doubt, that part known as *New Lots*.

Organization of Local Government and Courts.—During the earlier years of slow growth the Dutch towns scarcely needed any special or local provision for the administration of justice. The will of the Director of the West India Company, the two local officers appointed by him, and his occasional personal superintendence, sufficed to maintain good order among them. In course of time, however, difficulties arose from this lack of a properly-organized government. The Directors too often misused their powers, and were disposed to govern in a dictatorial and tyrannical manner, overlooking wholly the rights of the people. If imposed upon by the inferior officers of the town, it was worse than useless to appeal to the Direc-

tor, for these were simply carrying out his instructions. An appeal generally brought some punishment upon the villages for their audacity. A government of this character was not at all adapted to a people who had lived under the liberal form of government of Holland, where each city or village provided to a great extent for its own defense, administered its own finances, and governed itself by its own laws. Thus the inhabitants of the towns, who, in Holland, had been accustomed to have a voice in all matters relating to their government, could not quietly submit to the present arbitrary rule of the Directors.

Finally the growing popular discontent found expression in a convention of delegates from the Dutch towns of Long Island, assembled at *Nieuw Amsterdam*, Nov. 26, 1653; but adjourned until December. Up to this time, the civil affairs of *Middlewont* had been administered by an official called the "*Schout*," exercising, somewhat, the combined functions of a judge and sheriff, and subordinate to the "*Schout-fiscal*" of *Nieuw Amsterdam*. The name *schout* is supposed to be an abbreviation of the Dutch word *schuld-rechter*, or, "crime-righter;" i. e., a judge of crimes. The people of each village also had the right to elect two more *schepens*, or magistrates, as in the *Fatherland*. In November, 1646, Jan Teunissen, of *Brenckelen*, was made *schout*; and had jurisdiction, also, over *Middlewont* and *Amersfoort*. We find no mention of another *schout* being appointed till April, 1654, when David Provoost was made the first separate *schout* of *Brenckelen*. Teunissen probably remained *schout* of the other Dutch towns; although in the *Col. Docs. State of N. Y.* Provoost is called *schout* or sheriff of the Dutch towns on Long Island. *Midwont*, at this time, was allowed the privilege of a separate village to nominate three *Schepens*; and *Amersfoort* obtained two. Provoost was succeeded by Pieter Tonneman from January, 1656, to 1660; when he became the first Sheriff of *Nieuw Amsterdam*. The first entry in the oldest Court record of conveyances of property in the Town Clerk's office, at *Flatbush*, relates to the purchase, or allotment, of property in the village of *Middlewont* to this P. Tonneman, under date of July 2, 1659. He was, also, January, 1657, a member of the Supreme Council of the *Nieuw Netherlands*. In 1661 *Adriaen Hegeman*, a resident of *Middlewont*, was appointed, by Gov. Stuyvesant, as *schout* of *Brenckelen*, *Midwont*, and *Amersfoort*. He had been, in 1654, one of the three *schepens* to which the town of *Midwont* was entitled; and, from 1659 to 1661, had acted as clerk, or secretary, of *Midwont* and *Amersfoort*.

At the re-assembling of the convention, December 11th, 1653 (the *Flatbush* delegates being *Elbert Elbertsen* and *Thomas Spicer*) a strong demand was made for laws, "resembling, as nearly as possible, those of the *Fatherland*." Gov. Stuyvesant treated the matter as "audacity" on the part of the Colonists; re-asserted



his authority; reprimanded the burgomaster of New Amsterdam for calling such a convention, and sought to take the force of remonstrance by asserting that the three Dutch Long Island towns had "no right to jurisdiction."

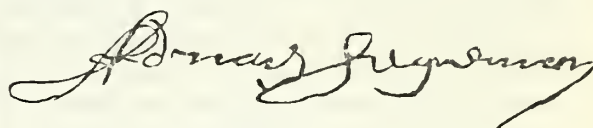
The convention re-assembled December 13, 1653, and declared they would protest to the States General, and West India Company. The Governor then ordered the convention to disperse and directed Breuckelen, Midwout and Amersfort to prohibit their delegates from appearing, for the present, at any meeting at New Amsterdam. Early in the following year, however, a serious trouble threatened the colonists; which, while it served to allay the excitement caused by the events of December, 1653, at the same time united the settlers of the Dutch towns more closely. Pirates and robbers infested the rivers on either side of New Amsterdam and the shores of Long Island, and constantly committed outrages upon the persons and property of the settlers on Long Island. While the English residents at Gravesend sympathized with and often harbored these men, the Dutch settlers in the various villages banded to resist them, and protect themselves and their property. Breuckelen, Midwout and Amersfort, April 7, 1654, formed a military company, and informed the Governor that they would "assist with all their might." Every third man was detailed to act as a minute-man, when required. A military officer was appointed in each town, called a Sergeant, and a public patrol in the village.

This expression of loyalty, so cheerfully and promptly given, was especially pleasing to the Governor, in view of the closing events of the previous year. It proved that the Dutch settlers were, at heart, true in their allegiance to the interests of the West India Company. He therefore resolved to reward the Dutch towns of Breuckelen, Midwout and Amersfort, by giving them the increased municipal privileges which they had desired. Thus, by making this distinction in favor of the Dutch towns, he rebuked the English settlers at Gravesend for their sympathy with the pirates—who were their countrymen—as well as for the part they had taken in the convention.


Local Officers Appointed.—It was at this time that the form of government was changed at Midwout, and the village was permitted to have a voice in the choice of its magistrates. A double number of persons were chosen by the people, and their names forwarded to the Governor, who from this list selected and commissioned those who should serve as magistrates. These local officers possessed functions and powers similar to those of the magistrates of New Amsterdam; and were under the immediate direction of a superior "District Court," composed of delegates from each town-court, together with the schout.

By direction of this "District Court" churches could be built, schools established, roads laid out, or

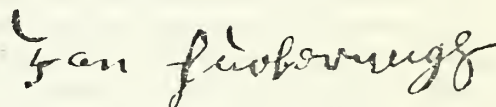
repaired. In fact, all the local affairs of the towns came within its jurisdiction; subject, of course, to the approval of the Governor, or the Supreme Council of New Netherlands. Under this arrangement the inhabitants of Midwout nominated six men in April, 1654, from whom three were chosen to act as schepens of the village. In the absence of any Midwout records earlier than 1659, we cannot state positively the names of these officers. We know that Adriaen Hegeman was appointed a local magistrate in 1654, and find his name on the earliest record of the village as serving still in the capacity of schepen. It is therefore reasonable to presume that the other men, whose names are found with his on the record of July 2, 1659, were appointed schepens with him in 1654. If this is correct, then the first three local magistrates of Midwout were Adriaen Hegeman, Willem Van Boerum, Jan Sueberingh.



Facsimile of Adriaen Hegeman's Signature.

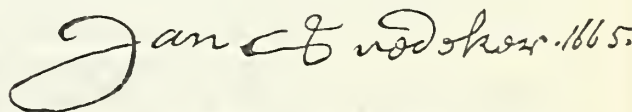


Facsimile of Willem Jacobse Van Boerum's Signature.



Facsimile of Jan Sueberingh's Signature.

In *Col. Hist. of N. Y.* the name of Jan Snedecor appears as the first sent by the Governor to settle Midwout. He was also one of the signers of the Patent; a shoemaker by trade, and kept a tap-house or tavern in New Amsterdam from 1642-1654, when he was sent by Governor Stuyvesant to his new settlement at Midwout. He is called in *Docs. of Col. Hist. of N. Y.* "one of the Director's Selectmen." It is reasonable to suppose that the Governor would certainly place this man in some position of influence. Although his name is not on any of the early records, Mr. TEUNIS G. BERGEN, in his *Early Settlers of Kings County*, states that "Jan Snedecor was a local magistrate of Midwout from 1654 to 1664."



Facsimile of Jan Snedecor's Signature.

"Five Dutch Towns."—This method of village government, by schepen and schout, continued until 1661. In that year New Utrecht and Boswyck (Bushwick) were joined to Breuckelen, Amersfort and Midwout, and the district was called the "Five Dutch Towns."



To these five Dutch towns were assigned two officers, representing the general government, and to whom the village schepens were subordinate, viz.: a schout-fiscal and a secretary, or clerk, the special function of the latter being to take acknowledgments of marriage settlements, deeds and wills. Adriaen Hegeman was the first schout-fiscal of the five Dutch towns, and he was also specially appointed as *auctioneer* for the district. He was probably succeeded in both offices by Francis De Bruyn, in 1673. In *Docs. of Col. Hist. of State of N. Y.* (Vol. II. p. 675) De Bruyn's appointment is recorded, with a reference to the former existence of the office, and its probable discontinuance while the towns were subject to the English.

"Whereas experience hath proved that it is highly necessary to continue the office of *Auctioneer* on Long Island, therefore on petition presented by Secretary Francis De Bruyn, he is thereunto commissioned and qualified, and said Francis De Bruyn is accordingly commissioned and appointed Auctioneer in the towns of Midwout, Amerfort, Breuckelen, Boshwyck and Utrecht, with their dependencies situate on Long Island &c. Done Fort Willem Hendrick, the first Jan. 1673."

A year later he was succeeded by Nicasius de Sille, of New Utrecht; and he, again, by Michael Hainelle.

The next change in the village government was made in 1665.

After the surrender of the colony to the English, in 1664, the government of Nieuw Amsterdam lost its distinctively Dutch character. The offices of Burgomaster, Schepens and Schout were abolished, and a Mayor, Board of Alderman and Sheriff were substituted in their place. This rendered necessary a change in the local and "district" government of the Long Island towns. Governor Nicoll therefore called a convention for the purpose of establishing a uniform method for the administration of justice in the various villages and plantations on Long Island. To this, held at Hempstead, February, 1665, Flatbush sent Jan Stryker, Hendrick Gucksen, and Hendrick Jorise Brinkerhoff as delegates. The code of "Duke's Laws," as they were called, which was passed by this convention, restored again to the Governor almost all the unlimited power enjoyed by his Dutch predecessors; and was not at all satisfactory to either the Dutch or English towns, which found themselves still without the desired representative form of government. The Flatbush delegates, as well as those of other towns, were so openly and severely censured by their fellow townsmen for their share in the enactment of this code that the Court of Assize, October, 1666, decreed "that whoever should thereafter detract or speak against any of the deputies who had signed an address to His Royal Highness, the Governor, he should be presented to the Court of Assizes and answer for slander." At this convention Long Island and Staten Island were united, as **YORKSHIRE** of which the five Dutch towns, with

Gravesend, Newtown, and Staten Island, were constituted the *West Riding*; all the towns of the present Queens county, except Newtown, became the *North Riding*; and those of the present Suffolk county formed the *East Riding*; and a High Sheriff was appointed for the Shire, with a deputy for each Riding, and a certain number of justices for each town. On the 1st or 2d of April, yearly, each town was to elect its own constable and eight (afterwards reduced to five) overseers, whose duties were strictly defined by the code. From these overseers in each village the constable was to select the jurors for the Court of Sessions or Assize. The overseers were to be "men of good fame and life, chosen by the plurality of voices of the freeholders"; four remained in office two years successively, and four were changed for new ones every year; the constables "to be chosen out of that number which are dismissed from their office of overseers," in the preceding years. The overseers were the assessors of the town; and, with the constable, made regulations in all matters which concerned the order and government of the town. They were authorized, together with the constable, to hold town-courts, for the trial of causes under £5. "On the death of any person, the constable and two overseers acted as coroners and surrogates, if any will was found. If no will was found, the constable, in the presence of the overseers, was, within forty-eight hours, to search after the estate of the deceased, and deliver an account of the same, in writing, under oath, to the next justice of the peace. The constable and Board of Overseers were required annually to appoint two of the overseers to make the rate, for building and repairing the church, for the maintenance of the minister, and for the support of the poor. They were to establish the bounds of the town, regulate fences, and, with the constable, appoint an officer to "record every man's particular marke, and see each man's horse and colt branded." The overseers filled vacancies in their number occurring by death, and any person, so chosen by his fellow townsmen, was obliged to serve, or pay a fine of £10. We find an entry upon the records that "Theodorus Polhemus, for refusing to stand constable for Flatbush, although legally elected, was by the court fined five pounds to the public." The constable and two overseers were to pay the value of an Indian coat for each wolf killed, and to cause the wolf's head to be "nayed over the door of the constable, their to remaine, as also to cut of both the eares, in token that the head is bought and paid for."

Overseers of Flatbush.—1675, Simon Hansen, John Roloffsen; 1676, Arian Ryers, Garret Sneider [Snediker]; 1679, Joseph Hegeman, Derick Jansen Van Vleet; 1680, Barent [Barthold?] Claas, Cornelius Berrian, Joseph Hegeman; 1681, Cornelius Berrian, Reynier Aertsen, Barthold Claas, Jan Remsen; 1682, Reynier Aertsen, Jan Jansen, Jan Remsen, Adrian Ryersen; 1683, Jan Aertsen, Aris Janse [Vander Bilt].

or Jan, son of Aert from the "Bilt," or hill; Jan Jansen, Jan Auckes [or Onke—Van Nuys.]

*Handwritten text: "Bilt" Jan Aertsen van der Byldt—van by au
Aertsen van der Byldt als
gvt-ingem*

"This is the Mark of Jan Aertsen Van der Byldt—from the Bilt," or Hill, in Friesland, the ancestor of the Vanderbilts of Kings County.

Handwritten signature: Aucke Jansen 1620

Facsimile of Signature of Aucke Jansen Van Nuys.

Among the other regulations made by this convention, which did not disdain to care for all the minutiae of legislation, was an order directing what flesh-brands were to be used for marking the horses and cattle of the several towns, the letters beginning alphabetically from the east end of the island; thus, Easthampton's brand-letter was A, and that of Flatbush, in order, was O.

Herewith we give a few extracts from the town records of this period (translated by TEUNIS G. BERGEN), showing the character of the legislation under the Schout and Scheppens.

Sunday Laws.—Under date October 5, 1659, we find the following:

SCHOUT
vs.
JAN KLAESSEN, } Scheppens Court.

Schout complained against the defendant for carting in buckwheat with his wagon and oxen on Sunday, contrary to the placards. Condemned to pay costs.

The "placards" probably refer to the proclamation upon the subject of Sabbath-breaking and drunkenness, issued with so much zeal by Governor Stuyvesant, shortly after his appointment of Governor, in 1645.

SCHOUT
vs.
JAN CORNELISEE, } Scheppens Court.

"Schout complained against the defendant for shooting 2 wild turkeys and a duck, on Sunday, and claimed a verdict of 25Gt., the penalty provided. Sentence suspended, its being his first offence."

A later entry shows that they were especially careful of the general interests of the town; and also treated all, both rich and poor, "of whatsoever quality he may be," alike.

"September 15, 1662.—Scheppens Court." By Schout and Scheppenen taken in consideration, the complaint come to them that the residents of this town receive damage by the cattle of their neighbors running at large without a herder: So it is that the Schout and Scheppenen to remedy this, ordain by this, that any person of whatsoever quality he may be, no cattle on the land may let run without a herder, on the penalty of each beast to be pounded."

About the same date we find further action in regard to this matter:

"September 15, 1662.—Schout and Scheppenen. That in violation of the regulation, great damage is done, so is it that the Schout and Scheppenen, for the same to remedy, ordain, that all of the residents a proper swing-gate 5 feet high, which shall open and shut, shall make to their premises before next Christmas, under penalty of 12G, and on leaving a gate open to be liable to a penalty of 6G."

Another entry shows, to some extent, the jurisdiction of these officers in ecclesiastical matters:

"February 2, 1663.—Schout and Scheppenen of Court of Midtwout, on request of Jan Sueberingh and Jan Strycker, to the Director General and Council in pursuance of an ordinance, appoint a double number of persons for service, as church masters of Midtwout, and further they, the said Court of Midtwout, for nomination of a double number of the following underwritten names:

Jan Strycker, Willem Jacobse Van Boerum, Jan Snediker, Jan Sueberingh.

We wait, &c., for the favorable decision from the Director General on the part of the Court of Midtwout.

JAN STRYCKER,
WILLEM JACOBSE VAN BOERUM, } Scheppenen.
HEYNDRIK JOORESEN,

ADRIAEN HEGEMAN,
Schout."

As already stated, by the "Duke's Laws" for town government, certain courts were established as a part of the system. There were three of these, viz.: the Town Court, Court of Sessions, and Court of Assize, the latter being held annually in the city of New Amsterdam. There is some difference of opinion among authorities in reference to the location of the Court of Sessions. The earliest records of this Court, in the County Clerk's office, are dated at Gravesend, 1668-1669. It is possible that, between 1665 and this earliest record, the court which was established immediately after the Convention of Hempstead, may have held its sessions, in 1665, at Flatbush; and its records may have been kept as the records of the original County Court.

Original Seat of Justice.—There is very little doubt but that the *original* seat of justice for the county under the Dutch governors was at Flatbush; and that it continued here until after the surrender to the English, and the permanent establishment of the Court of Sessions at Gravesend, either in 1665 or 1668. Rev. Dr. STRONG, who gathered many valuable facts in his *History of Flatbush* from the aged members of his congregation, who were the immediate descendants of the first settlers; upon their authority states positively, that "Flatbush in 1658 was the seat of justice for the county, and a market-town. At that time the public officers of the county, the Minister, Schout, Secretary or Clerk, as well as the public School-master, resided here. The courts were held here, and the general business of this section of Long Island was transacted here."

One evidence that this *original* court, whatever may



have been its name, was not held at Gravesend, is found in the fact that, when, in after years, the Court of Sessions was held there, and a court-house built, the inhabitants of the county, after a few years, petitioned to have the county-seat changed back to Flatbush, "because of the inconvenience of getting to Gravesend, the town being at the southern boundary of the county." If it had been held there *originally*, this difficulty would no doubt have presented itself before; and this experience of the people would have been an objection to the establishment again of the County-Court at Gravesend in 1668.

No doubt the true solution is this, that, after the change of government made by Governor Stuyvesant, in 1654, whereby the Dutch villages were granted greater municipal privileges, a certain form of court for the administration of justice was established. During the time that David Provoost acted as Schout, this court *may* have been held at Breuckelen, where he resided. When Pieter Tonneman was appointed, it is likely the court was held at Flatbush, where Tonneman owned lots and probably resided. It is certain, however, that after Adrian Hegeman became Schout, the court was held at Flatbush; for he resided here, and the records of the court (dated 1660), in the Town-clerk's office, are signed by him. It is evident that these court-records were not merely records of a town; but of a district-court; for one of the earliest minutes relates to the transfer or conveyance of property at Gouwannes.

As translated by Mr. TEUNIS G. BERGEN, it was as follows: "Aug. 26, 1659. Appeared before me Adrian Hegeman, Secretary of Midwout and Amersfort, Direk Janse (cooper) of the first part, and Pieter Pradt of the other; Derek Janse (cooper) sold to Pieter Pradt a certain Bouwery lying at Gowanes," etc.

Dis is dit ^{*mark*} *of* *Dirck Janse* *cooper* *of* *Gowanes*

Facsimile of Direk Janse's mark—a cooper's adze.

The first court-house for the county was erected at Gravesend in 1668, when the Court of Sessions was transferred to that village by order of the Hempstead Convention. For eighteen years this court sat at Gravesend. In accordance with an act passed at the second Colonial Assembly, held on Nov. 7, 1685, under Governor Dongan's administration, the Court of Sessions was moved to Flatbush. The cause for this, as stated in the preamble of the act, being the inconvenience to which the inhabitants of the county were subjected, in traveling as far as Gravesend. The edifice at this time erected (1686), served the county until 1758, when a new one was erected, which was superseded by a larger building in 1793. In 1832, it was burned, and

since then Brooklyn has been the County Town. (For history and description of the three county court-houses, supplied by the author of this history, see Chapter on *The Bench and Bar of Kings County*.)

The "Duke's Laws" continued to be those by which the town was governed, until October, 1683, when the first Colonial Legislature, convened by order of Gov. Dongan, and consisting of the Governor, Council and seventeen members, assembled in the city of New York. At this convention several important changes were made in relation to the government of the towns. The most objectionable features of the Duke's Laws were repealed. The "ridings" upon Long Island and Staten Island were changed to *counties*; and, instead of a court for certain ridings, each county, from this time, had its own court.

Office of Overseers changed to Commissioners.—This Assembly, also, made an important change in the town-government by the appointment of "Commissioners," in the place of *overseers*, as town-officers.

The following list of these officers, for the town of Flatbush, is given in Dr. Strong's *Hist. of Flatbush*, as follows: 1684, Adrian Ryersen, Cornelius Baronsen and John Auky; 1685, Stoffle Probasco and Joseph Hegeman; 1686, Arian Ryers and Pieter Stryker; 1687, Aris Janse and Stoffle Probasco; 1688, Pieter Stryker and Cornelius Bardolph.

Supervisors Appointed.—The office of Commissioner was continued until the first Tuesday in April, 1703, when *Supervisors* were elected in the several towns of Kings county. Although the supervisors were elected in April, 1703, yet the first meeting of the board was not held until the first Tuesday in October, 1703. The earliest record, however, of their meetings, that can be found, bears date of the first Tuesday in October, 1714; and was held at the court-house in Flatbush

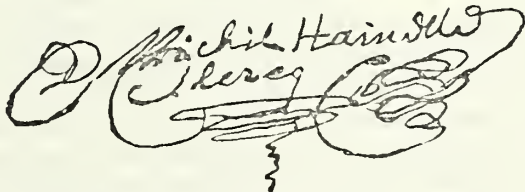
(Dr. Strong's *History*, p. 61). At this meeting the board chose Samuel Garretson, of Gravesend, as their clerk, and John Vanderbilt, of Flatbush, as treasurer of the county. At that time the ordinary and contingent expenses of the county (including the per diem compensation of the two members of the Colonial Assembly for their attendance during the year 1703) amounted to only £17. 0s. 6d., or \$177.56. This sum was apportioned among the several towns; Flatbush being assessed for £15. 1s. 6d. of the amount.

List of Supervisors.—The list of supervisors in the town of Flatbush is as follows (serving from April to April): Aris Vanderbilt, 1703-'05; Daniel Pollhemus, 1705-'06; Jacob Hendrick Ryck, 1706-'07; Aris Jansen



Vanderbilt, 1707-'08; Jan Vanderveer, 1708-'10; Benjamin Hegeman, 1710-'11; Ryck Hendricks, 1711-'12; Jan Cornelise, 1712-'13; Jacob Hendrickson, 1713-'14; Ryck Hendrickson, 1714-'15; John Vanderveer, 1715-'16; Daniel Remse, 1716-'17; Jacob Suydam, 1717-'18; Dominicus Vanderveer, 1718-'19; Lieut. Philip Nagle, 1719-'20; Cornelius Cornell, 1720-'21; Abraham Lott, 1721-'22; Ryck Hendrickson, 1722-'23; John Vanderveer, 1723-'24; Cornelius Cornell, 1724-'26; Peter Lefferts, 1726-'27; Johannes Ditmars, 1727-'28; Ryck Suydam, 1728-'41; John Van Kerk, 1741-'43; Peter Stryker, 1743-'44; John Van Kerk, 1744-'49; Dominicus Vanderveer, 1749-'51; Johannes Lott, jr., 1751-'59; Jeremias Vanderbilt, 1759-'63; Johannes Lott, jr., 1763-'82; Philip Nagle, 1782-'87; Johannes J. Lott, 1787-1804; John C. Vanderveer, 1804-'32; John Wyckoff, 1832 to February, '37; Isaac Cortelyou, February, 1837, to February '39; Jacob Rapelje, February, 1839, to April, '41; (April to April again); Isaac Cortelyou, 1841-'44; Jacob Rapalje, 1844-'45; Philip S. Crooke, 1845-'51; James V. Schoonmaker, 1851-'58; Philip S. Crooke, 1858-'70; Jacob V. B. Martense, 1870-'74; Peter S. Williamson, 1874-'82.

Town-Clerks.—The following is a list of the *Town-Clerks* of the town from 1659 to 1881: Adrian Hegeman, 1659-'71; Jacob Joosten, 1671-'73; Francays De Bruynne, 1673-'74; Michael Hainelle, 1674-'75; Jan

Day 13. September 14 1659


Facsimile of Signature of Michael Hainelle, Town Clerk.

Gerrit Van Marekje, 1675-'80; Derick Storm, 1680-'83; Johannes Van Eken, 1683-1700; Johannes Schenck, 1700-'11; Abraham Lott, 1711-'16; Jan Gaeell, 1716-'19; Adrian Hegeman, 1719-'41; Jores Remsen, 1741-'54; Jeremias Vanderbilt, 1754-'62; Petrus Van Steenberg, 1762-'73; John Lefferts, 1773-'76; Philip Nagle, 1776-'92; John Van Der Bilt, 1792-'94; John C. Vanderveer, 1796-1804; Garret Stryker, 1804-'10; Abraham Vanderveer, 1810-'16; Garret Stryker, 1816-'19; Adrian Hegeman, 1819-'23; William Ellsworth, 1823-'27; William Hegeman, 1827-'28; John A. Lott, 1828-'44; John Vanderbilt, 1844-'45; James V. B. Wyckoff, 1845-'49; Gilliam Schenck, 1849-'52; John L. Lefferts, 1852-'57; John T. Rhodes, 1857-'65; John Erskine Howard, 1865-'70; Lefferts Vanderbilt, 1870-'72; Gilbert Hicks, 1872-'79; Henry Vernon Vanderveer, 1879-'84.

Justices of the Peace.—First appointed at the Convention of Hempstead in 1665. The earliest records, until 1819, are in Dutch. In the first English records

the election of Justice of Peace is not accurately noted until 1835. The Town Clerk seems to have held the office of Justice of Peace and Town Clerk, as the first English records up to 1835 are signed by him with his title as Town Clerk and also with "Justice of Peace" affixed to his name.

The list is as follows: John I. Ditmas, 1819-'21; Adrian Hegeman, 1821-'23; Wm. Hegeman, 1823-'28; John A. Lott, 1828-'29; David Johnson, 1829-'35.

First Justices elected at Town Election: Jacob Rapalje, 1830-'33; Simon Rapalje, 1830-'33; Ferdinand Wyckoff, 1833-'35; John R. Snediker, 1833-'36; John A. Lott, 1833-'36; Isaac Cortelyou, 1836-'38; Stephen P. Stoothof, 1836-'40; Abraham Snediker, 1838-'40; David Johnson, 1838-'42; John Vanderveer, 1840-'41; Garret Vanderveer, 1840-'41; John Vanderbilt, 1840-'41; James V. B. Wyckoff, 1841-'42; Michael Schoonmaker, 1841-'42; James Birdsall, 1842-'43; John C. Lott, 1842-'43; Abraham Van Wyck, 1842-'43; Abraham Snediker, 1842; John Vanderbilt, 1842; James Birdsall, 1842; Abraham S. Eldert, 1844; Abraham Snediker, 1844; Jacob H. Sackman, 1844; Gerrit Martense, 1845-1848; John Cortelyou, 1845-1847; Edwin M. Strong, 1845; Cornelius Duryea, 1845; Englebert Lott, 1846; John Lefferts, 1848; Jonathan U. Forbell, 1849-1852; John V. Martense, 1850; Englebert Lott, 1850-'53; William H. Suydam, 1851; Alonzo G. Hammond, 1852-1860; Philip S. Crooke, 1852; John Hess, 1853; John V. Martense, 1853; Isaac Denyse, 1854; Leffert R. Cornell, 1855; Francis L. Dallan, 1856-'60; John Hess, 1856; John Oakey, 1857-'61; Henry Suydam, 1858-'61; Jeremiah L. Zabriskie, 1860-'62; Abraham Lott, 1861-'62; Francis L. Dallan, 1862-'64; George W. Close, 1863-'67; N. Lansing Zabriskie, 1863-'65; John H. Bergen, 1864-'70; Richard S. Bacon, 1864-'66; Richard L. Schoonmaker, 1865-'66; James Sutherland, 1866-'70; W. Ward Watkins, 1866-'69; John L. Bergen, 1866-'67; Rem R. Hegeman, 1867-'71; Henry Ditmas, Jr., 1867-'69; D. N. Comiskey, 1868-'70; Freeman Clarkson, 1869-'74; E. B. H. Steers, 1870; Alexander Gillespie, 1870; Peter Pigott, 1871; Frank Crooke, 1872; Andrew McKibbin, 1873; Freeman Clarkson, 1873; E. B. H. Steers, 1874; James Hardie, 1875; Peter Pigott, 1875; Wm. B. Green, 1876; Wm. McMahon, 1877; Thomas Chadwick, 1878; Peter Pigott, 1879; Christian F. Wulff, 1870-'81; Thomas H. Glass, 1880; Wm. McMahon, 1881.

Constable.—This office, in former days, was one of considerable importance, and its duties required responsible men. For over a century the office was held by some of the most prominent citizens of the town. The office of village constable was created by the Hempstead Convention in 1665. The names of the earlier constables cannot be found. Jacob Stryker is the first mentioned constable, serving from 1669 to 1670. The list of his successors is long; and since, in modern times, the office has become of very much less importance

Jacob Stryker. 1680.

Facsimile of Jacob Stryker's Autograph.

than formerly, it is hardly necessary to give the names of its incumbents, especially as they are to be found in Dr. STRONG's *History of Flatbush*, published in 1842.

Treasurers of County.—From 1714 to 1840, a period of one hundred and twenty-six years, the *Treasurer* of the county was, with one exception, a resident of Flatbush.

For these, as well as those who have served the county as *clerks of the Board of Supervisors*, and as *judges of the County courts*; as members of the *Colonial Assembly* and of the *State Legislature*, see the chapter on "*Bench and Bar of Kings County*."

Distinguished Citizens.—Many of the inhabitants of Flatbush have been called upon, from time to time, to fill representative positions of responsibility and trust in the County, State and National Governments.

According to BERGEN'S *Early Settlers of Kings county*, Gerardus Willemse Beckman, of Flatbush, was also chosen as a member of the Colonial council, and its President. He was also acting-governor in 1709-1710, and Colonel of Militia, as well as Justice of Peace for Flatbush in 1685. He will be more particularly mentioned in our Chapter on the *Medicine and the Medical Profession in Kings County*.

Dr. STRONG states "that among the delegates from the county of Kings who met in the city of New York, in convention April 10, 1775, for the purpose of choosing delegates to the first Continental Congress, was JOHN VANDERBILT; who, from his being subsequently a member of the Senate of the State was called "Senator John," to distinguish him from Judge John Vanderbilt. Among the delegates chosen by that convention to represent the county in that Congress, were no less than three from this village, viz.: Johannes Lott, John Lefferts, and John Vanderbilt. These delegates convened at New York on 22 of May, 1775; and continued to meet at different places, from time to time, till the adoption of the Constitution of the State in April, 1777.

JOHN LEFFERTS, of this village, was also a member of the Provincial Congress, from this county, which met on the 30th day of June, 1776. His son, PETER LEFFERTS, of Flatbush, was one of two delegates from this county to the convention which met at Poughkeepsie on 27th day of June, 1778, to adopt the Constitution of the United States. He was afterward a member of the Senate of the State, in which he appeared in a suit made entirely of homespun cloth, of so fine a texture and finish that it attracted special notice. His son, JOHN LEFFERTS, of Flatbush, was at one time

a member of Congress from this district; and also a delegate to the convention of 1821, which met for the amending of the Constitution of the State.

It is probable that no man in the county has been better known for his uprightness, honesty and talent, or has received higher honors at the hands of his party and the people, or rendered greater benefits to the village of Flatbush, and better protected the interests of the county towns, than the Hon. JOHN A. LORR, whose full biography will be found in the chapter on the *Bench and Bar of Kings county*; as will, also, that of his talented law-partner, the late Judge JOHN VANDERBILT. The Hon. JOHN OAKES's biography will also be found in the same chapter. He is a native of Brooklyn, but removing in boyhood to Flatbush, his whole active life has been prominently identified with the welfare of Flatbush.

On a comparison of these various lists the singular fact is noticeable, that while the inhabitants of Flatbush were so frequently called upon to take such an active part in the county and State government, from the original settlement until 1842, comparatively few of them have held such positions since that time. A reason for this may be found in the fact that Flatbush, until 1832, a period of nearly two hundred years, was the county town. As a consequence the inhabitants were brought into a more immediate contact with the political interests of the county and State, than they were after the county seat was moved to Brooklyn.

Flatbush During the Revolution.—As heretofore stated (page 32), the people of Kings county entered upon the revolutionary struggle with much reluctance. Stimulated by the proximity of the turbulent population of New York city, as well as by the contagious excitement of current events, they "equally, with the other colonists, resisted the encroachments and taxation of their foreign rulers; they also, at first, had their meetings and expressed their sympathy with the general uprising. On April 5, 1775, a meeting was held at Flatbush, at which deputies were appointed for choosing delegates to the Continental Congress, to be held at Philadelphia in May, from Flatbush. DAVID CLARKSON, ADRIAN VOORHEES, JACOBUS VANDEVENTER and JOHN VANDERBILT were appointed; and May 20, the magistrates and freeholders met in Brooklyn to co-operate with the freeholders of the City and County of New York, and other meetings for a similar purpose were afterward held." (*Field*.)

The news of the battle of Lexington (received in New York April 23d, the very day when the Provincial Convention had dissolved), led to a call by the citizens for the assembly of a Provincial Congress on the 24th of May. It was in compliance with this request that a meeting of town delegates was held at Flatbush, May 22d. But, even then, prudence had taken the place of valor, and Flatbush, through her delegate, Nicholas

Cowenhoven, declined any complicity in the proceedings of the Convention; and, at the same time, expressed the intention of remaining neutral in the approaching struggle. Nicholas Cowenhoven and Johannes E. Lott were the delegates chosen to represent Flatbush.

In June, 1776, we find some of the royalists of Flatbush engaged in a wide-spread plot to seize the person of Gen. Washington; and, in the confusion ensuing, to rise and overawe the whigs. Mr. T. W. FIELD mentions that :

"David Mathews, the mayor of New York, resided for a portion of the year at his country-seat in Flatbush; and, although by his great adroitness and caution, he managed to avoid such complicity with the plot as could be proven, he was undoubtedly the lieutenant of the chief conspirator, Gov. Tryon. Near him, in the village of Flatbush, lived William Axtel, a loyalist gentleman of wealth and influence, afterwards Colonel of the British provincial militia. The plot undoubtedly had its inception on board the British ship-of-war Asia; was matured at Flatbush, the residence of Mayor Mathews, and relied for its principal sustainers and adherents upon the loyalists of Long Island. Of the ninety-eight persons who were ultimately charged with complicity in this plot, fifty-six were residents of Kings and Queens counties. The nightly return of Mathews to his residence, not more than four or five miles from the landing-place of boats from the Asia, and his daily return to the city, made him the fittest organ of communication between the Governor and the loyalists. The conspiracy failed to accomplish anything, except to increase the rigor of surveillance over the Long Island loyalists, who felt its influence for many months subsequently."

The Skirmishes of Flatbush.—This village had a distinct share in the movements and events which culminated, on the 27th of August, 1776, in what is known as the Battle of Long Island—more properly the Battle of Brooklyn. As will be seen by reference to the account of the Battle of Long Island (Chapter VI. of the *General History of Kings County*, in this volume), Flatbush lay in the track of one of the British columns of attack, and was the scene of some of the preliminary fighting of that eventful action. When the British army landed at Denyse's ferry, on the morning of the 22d, a heavy column, under Lord Cornwallis, pushed forward to Flatbush. "A small redoubt had been constructed by the Americans, near the western boundary of the village, and here occurred the first collision between the British and the American forces on our island." Cornwallis' vanguard, under the Hessian Colonel, Donop, reached Flatbush in the evening. We quote from T. W. FIELD's *History of the Battle of Long Island*, Vol. II. of the *Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society* :

"Three hundred American riflemen, who had occupied the village, abandoned it as soon as the Hessian battery of six guns had taken position and opened fire. The possession of this slumbrous little Dutch village by the Hessians was not, however, destined to be maintained without a struggle. The awe inspired by the imposing array of the German troops had worn away in the cool night, and early on the morning of the 23d the slumbers of the heavy-eyed Hessians

were broken by a dash upon their right wing, resting near the west end of the village. On the thickly wooded hills near Flatbush, Colonel Hand was in command of the whole Pennsylvania battalion of riflemen, consisting of 553 officers and privates. Believing that the familiarity acquired by combat with the formidable strangers would dissipate the increasing dread with which they were regarded, Col. Hand ordered an assault upon their lines. The attack was spirited, though feebly maintained, as the Americans retired to the woods as soon as a field-piece was brought to bear upon them."

Emboldened, however, by their success, the Americans, on the afternoon of the same day (23d), made another assault on Donop's left wing, encamped a short distance west of the Brooklyn and New Utrecht road. So impetuous was this attack, that * * * *

"that portion of the Hessian corps was driven back upon the main body, then lying south of the Dutch Church, and the whole detachment was held at bay for more than one hour. The fire of the American riflemen was so galling that the Hessians were compelled to improvise redoubts, from the houses of Adrian Hegeman and Lefferts Martense, for the purpose of repelling their attack. In these buildings they cut holes, wherever these afforded them position for firing upon the American sharpshooters. At length the cannon, from which the Hessian gunners had doubtless been driven by our riflemen, were brought into position, and opened their fire upon the assaulting party. At this time the houses of Jeremiah Vanderbilt, Leffert Letterts, and Evert Hegeman were in flames, and added, by their conflagration, the horrors which war had brought upon this quiet village. Although it has been a popular habit to charge this incendiarianism upon the Hessian invaders, it is yet certain that these dwellings were fired by the Americans, to prevent their occupation as defensive positions by the enemy."

"On the 25th the Americans determined to meet the Hessian artillery with the same arms; and, accordingly, a strong body of riflemen, accompanied by several guns, pushed forward beyond the edge of the woods, and opened fire with round and grape-shot, upon the devoted village, behind whose walls the enemy sought shelter from the rebel sharpshooters. The attack was well maintained for a time, but was at length repulsed by the greater weight and steadiness of the Hessian artillery,"

The poor Germans, however, were much harassed and disgusted by this, to them, novel and irritating method of warfare; and Cornwallis was finally obliged to relieve them from picket and guard duty, so that they might be enabled to procure a little rest.

"The inconsiderate Americans, however, beat up their camp again at 2 o'clock on the morning of the 26th, and they were once more hurried to the front to assist in repelling these midnight prowlers. This was the fifth considerable skirmish, in three days, which those uneasy Yankees had compelled the slow-moving Germans to repel, and their pertinacity was becoming unendurable. During the afternoon of the 26th a stronger force than had yet been engaged was pushed forward upon the Hessian lines; and this time with such threatening demonstrations that Lord Cornwallis, whose instructions were imperative not to press the rebels from their position, immediately ordered Col. Donop to retire. The brave, though cruel, Hessian, begged hard to be permitted to remain and intrench himself, but was compelled to retire to the main body, which was far too powerful for

the light assaulting column of the Americans to make any impression upon it."

Late in the evening of that day, the whole British force was in motion, in the decisive movement which precipitated the battle of the 27th.

The British Occupation of the Town, 1776-1783.—Flatbush, of course, suffered its full share of the lawlessness and oppression to which Long Island was subjected during the seven years occupation of the British forces. Mrs. G. L. VANDERBILT, in her very interesting *Social History of Flatbush*, thus speaks of its unhappy condition after the battle of the 27th August, 1776, which placed the whole county at the mercy of the British :

"It is almost impossible to realize the picture of devastation this village presented at that period. The cattle belonging to the farmers had been driven, by command of the American officers, into Queens and Suffolk Counties, to prevent their falling into the possession of the invaders, and the grain, the produce of the year, was stacked in the fields and burned, for the same reason. The houses of those in the northern section of the town were burned. In the line of march of the British, and over the district of hills and woods which embraced or bounded the area of the battle-ground, were strewn the bodies of the dead who had fallen either in battle, or in irregular fighting in the hills and hollows, for there was no quarter given by the Hessians. It is probable that some of these were never buried, for bones were frequently found long after the engagement, and the superstitious avoided a locality said to be haunted. During that dreadful August many of the inhabitants fled from their homes, which were taken possession of by lawless adventurers. The sick and wounded were placed in the church, and the want of attention to their sufferings caused the whole air to be infected. In the Autumn a camp-fever became epidemic, and proved very fatal. The grass grew in the streets, all business was at an end; the wet Autumn which succeeded a hot Summer added to the filth of the encampment, and the want of many of the common comforts of life caused almost constant illness, even among those who escaped the fever. Amid all their sickness and poverty they were constantly harrassed by petty exactions from which there was no appeal; their fences and even their farming utensils were used for firewood; their horses were taken from before the plow; their cattle were driven away or butchered; their fowls were stolen; and frequently small parties of soldiers on the march took temporary possession of their homes, driving out the owners if the room was needed. As a sort of practical joke the feather-beds were sometimes emptied into the wells. The dark cherry-wood cupboards were dismantled, and from the shelves the horses of the cavalry-officers were fed. It was useless to seek redress, none could be had. To make the scanty supply still more inadequate, the whole town was filled with soldiers. Some of these were of the roughest class. These were billeted upon the people without their consent, and often in opposition to their express wishes. For a regiment of Waldeckers no compensation was ever given. Even where Congress promised two dollars per week, there were very little prospect at that time that it would be paid; and the Continental money, which was a legal tender, was much depreciated. There was no safety from thieves either day or night, but the loss of property was small compared to the danger of life, and the constant feeling of personal security. A band of men of notoriously bad character con-

stituted a company under the name of the 'Nassau Blues,' and were in possession of the Court House. They not only helped themselves freely to the property of the inhabitants, of whom they were called the 'Guards,' but they were the terror of respectable people."

In connection with this subject the reader is referred to pages 100 and 101; as well as to Chapter VI, of our *General History of Long Island*.

In the appendix to Mrs. VANDERBILT'S book, is an exceedingly vivid sketch of "Home Life During the War of the Revolution," taken from the lips of an old lady of Flatbush, who was in her sixteenth year at the time of the Battle of Long Island.

Old Mills.—In former days two large windmills formed a conspicuous feature in the village landscape. One of these stood east of the main road and south of the road to New Lots, formerly called Cow Lane, now East Broadway,—or near the northeast corner of present Erasmus street and Nostrand avenue. It was of very peculiar construction; built by a Mr. Molineaux, of Westbury, L. I., in 1820, and owned by Rich. Willis, of New York city. It was circular in form, about 60 feet in diameter, and about 25 feet high to the eaves, surmounted with a conical roof, from the top of which issued the shaft, rising some 25 feet above the roof. To this shaft were attached an upper and lower set of arms, extending at right angles to the shaft, for a distance of 20 feet. Between these upper and lower arms, at their extremities, a series (16 or 18) of perpendicular fans, or movable wings, were attached, which could be so adjusted, at any angle, as to take the wind from any direction. It turned one "run" of stones only, and was more lately known as "Lloyd's Mill." It is supposed to have been the only mill of this peculiar construction upon the Island, and was taken down January, 1868. Another old mill stood upon Mr. John C. Vanderveer's farm, in the southern section of the village, and was always called "Vanderveer's Mill." This is said to have been the first windmill erected upon Long Island. *The Rural Gazette*, March 4, 1879, states that it was completed in 1804 by John C. Vanderveer. It was of immense strength, the main timbers being twenty-eight feet high and two and a half feet thick. It was four stories high, with a stone foundation of about three feet. The arms and sails, similar in construction to the Holland mills, were twenty-six feet long. There were three sets or "run" of stones. The sails were first blown off in the famous September gale of 1821. About ten years after the sails were blown off again, after which they were not repaired. During the drafting riots of 1863 it was a refuge for the colored people, who were threatened by the Irish. It was destroyed by fire on the night of the 30th of April, 1879.

Old Houses.—These have nearly all passed away, one by one. The only one still standing is that owned by the heirs of John C. Bergen. In Mrs. Gertrude

Lefferts Vanderbilt's delightful book, *Social History of Flatbush*, and Dr. P. L. Schenck's interesting *Zabriskie Homestead*, will be found reminiscences of these ancient dwellings, which our limited space will not allow us to dwell upon. The old "Robinson House," alias "Melrose Hall," which is soon to be demolished, deserves more than a passing notice.

Melrose Hall.—There are few towns in this State possessing more of historic interest than Flatbush; and, certainly, no single dwelling in this lovely village has witnessed more of tragic or romantic incident than has Melrose Hall. Its erection ante-dates, by many years, the American Revolution; it possesses a style of architecture quite unknown to the early Dutch settlers; and on a plan grander and more pretentious than any of its contemporaries.

It is said to have been built by an Englishman by the name of Lane, in 1749. It was adorned with gilded drawing-rooms and wide wainscoted-halls; surrounded by ample grounds, tastefully laid out in flower-beds and garden-plots, all hid away behind the far-stretching lawn. Here its proprietor, with his numerous friends, led a merry life, not unfrequently awakening the still echoes of the night by their bacchanalian songs and revels.

After Lane's death the property was purchased by Col. William Axtell. Axtell was a descendant of Daniel Axtell, a Colonel in Cromwell's army, who was beheaded by order of Charles II—he having been refused the benefits of the act of "General pardons and obligations," by Parliament.

William Axtell was born on the Island of Jamaica. Here he owned large sugar plantations which were sold

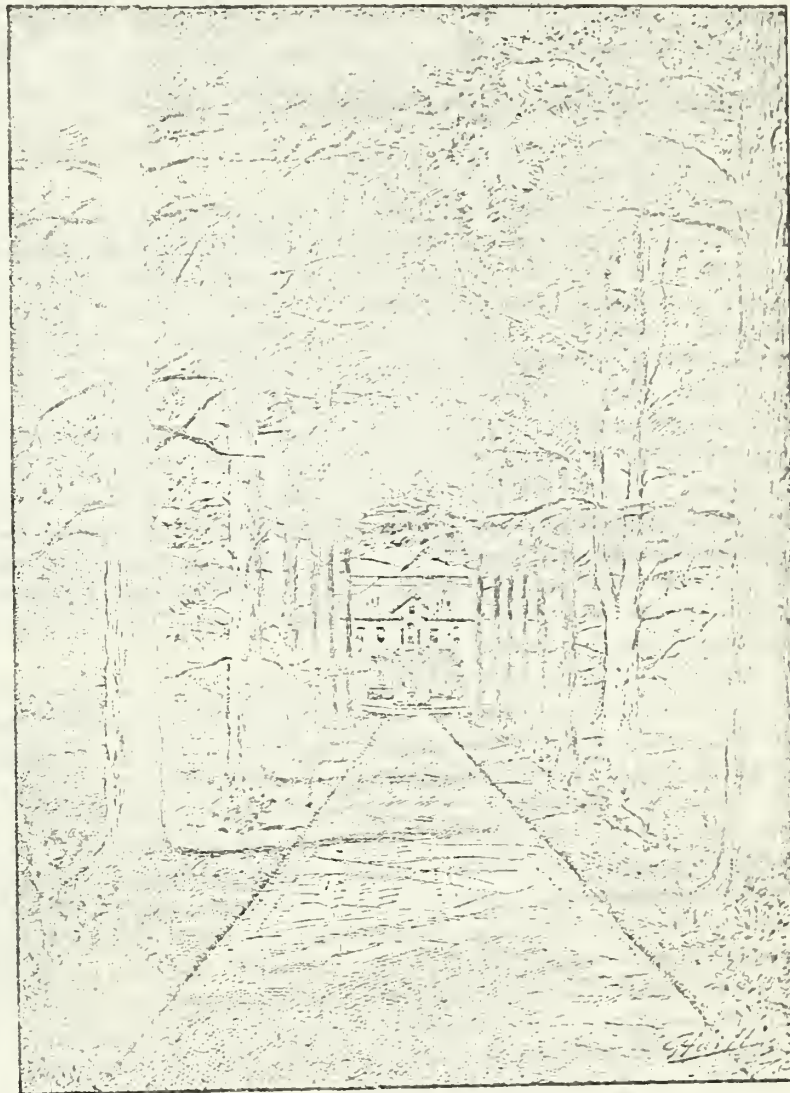
in 1759, which is the probable date of his coming to New York. Here he lived until 1763, when he sold his house and lot in Wall street and came to Flatbush to reside. He was a member of the King's Council; by birth and education a loyalist; and, from instinct as well as choice, a Tory. Being a man of much influence and considerable wealth, his new home became a favorite rendezvous for all the Tory element in and about the metropolis. Here many a secret conclave was held, and many a plan concocted, to thwart the designs of the

Rebels. Here the beauty and fashion of the day were often hospitably entertained, and the spacious ball-room resounded with the dulcet notes of the lute or viol, while flying feet kept even pace with the swift-flying hours.

In 1778 Axtell was commissioned, by Sir William Howe, to raise a regiment of foot, of which he was Colonel. In 1783 the Colonel and his officers were presented by their lady friends with a handsome standard of colors. This presentation took place in front of his house; his men and officers forming in a circle around the flag, which they saluted, taking a solemn oath to support it forever. Afterwards, a sumptuous dinner

was served in the hall and grounds, and the event closed with a brilliant ball, the like of which was seldom seen in the infant colony.

In 1776, a few days before the Battle of Brooklyn, while Axtell was entertaining a party of British officers, an American gunner, stationed on the wooded heights beyond, threw a shell into the house, causing much damage, and great consternation to the inmates. After the battle of Long Island, as is well known, Flatbush remained in the hands of the British



MELROSE HALL. 1883.

until the close of the war. During this period many American prisoners were paroled here; among them several officers. The conduct of the Tories towards them was so insolent and overbearing, that one of the Americans, Captain William Marriner, after his release, resolved to be avenged. For this purpose he procured a whale-boat and a picked crew, and set out from the Jersey shore for Gravesend Bay, where he landed in the evening, and proceeded without delay or molestation to Flatbush. Here he divided his men into four parties and proceeded to the residences of Major Moncrief, Col. Sherbrook, Col. Mathews (then Mayor of New York), and Col. Axtell. At a given signal, the doors of the various houses were battered in, and Moncrief and Sherbrook captured; but, fortunately for Mathews and Axtell, they escaped, having remained in New York that night.

Even if Colonel Axtell had been at home, his capture would have been no easy task, for the house abounds in secret closets, and out-of-the-way nooks, where one could easily hide. Indeed, much mystery surrounds these secret rooms. By some, they were supposed to have been constructed by order of Col. Axtell for such emergencies as the above. By others, they are associated with secrets of a more terrible nature, and have been peopled with ghosts and hobgoblins. One thing is certain, for no inconsiderable period of its history, Melrose was looked upon suspiciously by its neighbors as a place to be avoided after night-fall; and children were awed into subjection and silence by stories of phantom sights and sounds, seen and heard in and about the ancient place.

In consequence of Axtell's well-known Tory proclivities, his property was forfeited by an act of the legislature, and sold by a Commission, on the 21st day of October, 1784. The purchaser was Aquila Giles, an American officer of some distinction, who had often visited here in the early part of the war, but who was subsequently forbidden the place. Among the then inmates of the house was Miss Shipton, said to have been a niece of Mrs. Axtell, to whom Col. Giles was betrothed, and whom he afterwards married. Thus, by the fortunes of war, master and guest changed places; and Col. Giles, and his wife Eliza, were the happy possessors of Col. Axtell's estate until June 28, 1809, when they conveyed the same to Bateman Lloyd.

Lloyd was a native of Salem, N. J., an officer in the American army, and died here in 1815. Through his heirs it finally passed into the possession of James Mowatt, husband of the well-known actress, who resided here from 1836 to 1841.

Mrs. Mowatt, in her auto-biography, speaks of her life in Flatbush most enthusiastically. Of the house she says there were dark and spacious vaults beneath the kitchen, where it was said English prisoners had been confined; and a secret chamber above the great ball-room, where it was affirmed a young girl had been

purposely starved to death, and whose ghost wandered, at night, about the house.

Here she spent happy years, as she herself writes, trundling hoops, skipping the rope, riding horseback, and dressed in half Turkish costume, shooting birds on the wing, much to the annoyance and disgust of her staid Dutch neighbors. In 1844 Dr. John Robinson purchased the property, and came here to reside with his family. Dr. Robinson was a gentleman of the olden school, and a graduate of Dublin University. Though his practice was mostly in the city of New York, he took a just pride in Melrose, and preserved its trees and rare shrubs with scrupulous care. He resided longer in Melrose Hall than any other person; and gave character, by his individuality, to the whole place. He died in 1879, much regreted by those who had the pleasure of an intimate acquaintance with him.

Since his death, Melrose Hall, and a part of the original domain, have been purchased by his old friend and neighbor, Dr. Homer L. Bartlett, who contemplates removing the ancient mansion, and converting the lawn and grounds into a beautiful park, where family residences can be built beneath the shadows of these venerable and historic trees. Such is the logic of fate. The cry of the whip-poor-will gives place to the prattle of childhood; and the shadows of ghosts are supplanted by the spray and mist of the fountain of Melrose Park.

Town Pound.—On the south side of Cow Lane, or East Broadway, about sixty feet east of Loenst street, in former days, was located the town pound. Its high board-fence enclosed an area of about forty feet square, extending almost half way across the street. Adjoining it was the colored people's burying-ground, extending west about 100 feet, to a pond, on the land now occupied by the Public School and the building of the Flatbush Engine Company. This pond, in early days, probably extended to the middle of the line of the street; this accounts for the angle in the street at this point. When this property, then owned by the Reformed Church, was improved, and the street laid out in 1865, these relics of the old town were removed. The graves were opened and the remains removed to a new burying-ground in another section of the Reformed Church land, at the northeast corner of the cemetery of the Holy Cross. Dr. Strong quotes a record of the court, November 12, 1695, ordering a pound and a good pair of stocks to be built immediately. It is probable, therefore, that the pound had been located on this site for one hundred and sixty or more years.

Stocks and Whipping Post.—The *stocks* were erected in front of the old Court House, and were still in existence in the early part of this century. Near by was a *whipping-post*; and one of the town officers was a public-whipper, with an annual salary of £3. There was also a *public brew-house*, located in the southern part of the town, near Vernon avenue, on the property now owned by the Brooklyn City Railroad Company.

THE MODERN HISTORY OF FLATBUSH,

1830—1883

POPULATION.—After obtaining the patent from Governor Stuyvesant, in 1651, the settlement appears to have increased in population more rapidly than any of the other towns. This may have arisen from its central position, and because it early became the market town. As early as 1658 it was the seat of justice for this section of Long Island, and in 1654 the governor issued an order for building the first church for the "Five Dutch Towns," at Flatbush.

The first reference to the population is found in Vol. II. of *Colonial Documents, N. Y.*, where it is stated that "all the men in the town to the number of *seventy-three* took the oath of allegiance." Breuckelen and "*dependencies*" had at this time eighty-one men. None of the other towns had over fifty men.

The next mention of the population is in Vol. III of *Doc. Hist.*, in a census of the Kings county towns for the year 1698. According to this, Flatbush contained sixty-two men, seventy-two women, two hundred and sixty-three children, eight apprentices, and seventy-one slaves, making a total of four hundred and seventy-six; Brooklyn at this time numbering five hundred and nine. In 1840 the population was one thousand five hundred and thirty-seven; in 1880 the population of Flatbush (including the settlements of Parkville and Windsor Terrace) numbered 7,634. The first assessment rolls give the valuation of the taxable property of the town for 1675 as £5079 19. 0.; 1676, as £4872 11. 0.; 1683, as £7757 10. 0. (while Breuckelen for the same year had a valuation of £5793 10. 0.); Flatbush, 1820, \$504,408.00; 1840, \$1,100,555.00; 1880, Real-estate, \$4,005,550.00; Personal, \$281,500.00. In the census of 1755 Flatbush possessed the largest number of slaves, there being 108 as against 67 in Brooklyn, and thirty-five in Flatlands.

Changes in the Village.—The destruction of the court-house by fire, in 1832, was the first of the many and great changes which have taken place in the town during the past fifty years. By this event, and the removal of the courts to Brooklyn, the character of the village was changed. No longer the county-seat, it became the quiet country village; and, instead of being considered the most important town in the county, it was now distinguished from the other villages only by its rural beauty, and the larger number of its inhabitants. One change has followed another in quick succession, so that the village has changed in a more rapid and marked manner within the last forty years than during the previous two hundred years. Dr. Strong states that the first fences through the village were

made of stone, surmounted by earth and sod, upon which were planted shoots of the primrose. These were kept properly trimmed and gave a very neat and pretty appearance to the village. But these fences were destroyed at about the time of the Revolutionary war, the primrose-bushes all dying during a single season. Gradually the common post-and-rail fence took the place of the stone fences, making a very marked and unpleasant change. After a number of years these were displaced by neat picket fences. About the year 1812, Lombardy poplars were planted in great numbers on both sides of the main street; but, although they gave the village a most picturesque appearance, were illy adapted to this climate, and in a few years were mostly destroyed and taken down. Until the year 1855 a large number of weeping willow trees formed a beautiful feature in the village scenery. There were six or eight of these trees around the Reformed Church.

Historical Trees.—In addition to these, there have been five remarkable linden trees in the village, whose age goeth beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant, and which were probably relics of the primeval forest. One of these grew upon the site now occupied by the residence of John A. Lott. Dr. Strong states that, on one occasion, the Court of the county held its session under this tree. The second was upon the southeast corner of Flatbush road and East Broadway, or Cow Lane, as it was originally called. Another stood on the corner of Grant street and Flatbush road, adjoining the yard of the chapel of the Reformed Church. The fourth, standing like a village sentinel, on the northwest corner of the Main road and Church Lane, shading and protecting with its ancient arms the old homestead of the Lloyd and Zabriskie families, was destroyed by a gale of wind in October, 1876. According to village tradition this tree has quite an historical notoriety. It is said that during the war Washington and his officers pitched their tents under its far-reaching branches; and that the English officers placed their tents in the shade of the same tree after the capture of the village. Tradition also says that in early times, at stated intervals during the summer, an itinerant Methodist preacher held services under this tree. Dr. Strong states that during the war of the Revolution Major David Lennox, as a prisoner, was billeted upon Mr. Bateman Lloyd, who then owned this house. While thus a prisoner he was visited by his brothers, Robert and William, who endeavored to influence him to desert the American cause. The interview took place under this tree. They used every inducement, but although completely overcome by the prospect of separation from his brothers, Le

turned from them, and, amid his tears, exclaimed with Roman firmness: "I will never forsake my country in her need." Both house and tree disappeared from sight at about the same time. The old house, more than two hundred years old, was taken down in November, 1877, to make room for the new and elegant residence of Dr. John L. Zabriskie. The fifth tree still stands in front of the residence of the late Gen. Philip S. Crooke. The huge trunk, in its extreme age, is no longer capable of sustaining the weight of its immense branches; and, several years before his death, Gen. Crooke had riggers to fasten chains around the branches in the upper part of the tree, and a strong iron band around the trunk, so that it might still be preserved in its beauty.

Sidewalks Regulated.—About the year 1827, the first attempt was made to regulate the sidewalks of the village, and bring them to a uniform appearance and grade. The first to undertake this improvement was Mr. Matthew Clarkson. The next improvement was the placing a neat wooden, and often quite ornamental, railing in front of each dwelling, separating the sidewalk from the road. This railing, in later days, extended, on either side of the street, in an almost unbroken line, from one end of the village to the other, giving to the street a neat and beautiful appearance.

Sidewalks and Crossings Flagged.—In the year 1874, by a special Legislative act, the Commissioners of Highways were authorized to flag the street sidewalks of the village upon application of a majority of the property owners upon the street. A later act authorized them to lay cross-walks at the intersection of streets. On the west side of the main road, the walk is paved from one end of the village to the other; and, on the east side, from the city line to Vernon avenue.

Flatbush Main Road.—The road from Brooklyn to the Flatbush Reformed Church was originally a branch road, owned by the Brooklyn, Flatbush & Jamaica Turnpike Company. In 1855, Teunis J. Bergen, Philip S. Crooke, John Lefferts, Jeronius I. Johnson, and others, organized a company, with Teunis J. Bergen, president, Philip S. Crooke, secretary; and buying out the interest of the Jamaica Company in the Flatbush section of this road, they formed the *Flatbush Plank-Road Company*, and proceeded to lay down a plank-road from Brooklyn to Flatlands. The road, as at present constituted, was surveyed in 1855, by Teunis G. Bergen. Right of way, with the privilege to charge toll and lay planks on the section of the road south of the Reformed Church in Flatbush, was obtained from the Road Commissioners of the towns; as this portion of the route belonged to the towns of Flatbush and Flatlands. After a number of years this road became thoroughly worn out; and, about the year 1855-6, was taken up, and a macadamized-road was built in its place by the prisoners in the Kings County Penitentiary, hired by the company. Such of the planks as

were available were used, at the suggestion of Teunis J. Bergen, for village plank-walks, and for a time did good service, but finally became warped, unsafe and unpopular.

Old Stage Routes.—For more than one hundred and fifty years the inhabitants had ridden to the city over an "exceedingly stony road" in their common farm-wagons, which were made in early days without springs. About the year 1830 a line of stages was established by Smith Birdsall. A stage left the village in the morning for the city and returned at evening. There was, at that time, no *post-office* here. Letters intended for those resident here, were addressed to Brooklyn and brought out to the village, for many years, as a favor, by Mr. Cornelius Duryea, whose business led him to the city daily. The first post-office was located here after Colonel James C. Church, of Fort Hamilton, established his mail-coach route between Fort Hamilton and Brooklyn. Mr. Michael Schoonmaker was the first postmaster at Flatbush, serving until about 1845, when his son, Richard L., was appointed. In 1865 Miss Phebe Case was appointed serving until May, 1870, when Gilbert Hicks was appointed, and held the office until 1882, when Henry Paton became postmaster. Another line of stage-coaches, owned by Conklin Carll, of Brooklyn, and driven by the well-remembered "Billy Cutting," was started between Gravesend and Brooklyn; and these two lines, in 1838-9, caused the withdrawal of Birdsall's line. In 1845, after the discontinuance of the Fort Hamilton coaches, George Bennett, of New Utrecht, established a line between Flatbush and the city; and, in 1847, was succeeded by Thomas Jones, whose omnibus left the village every hour during the day. This line was bought, in 1849, by Garrett Stryker, who sold, in 1852, to James Davis; and, in 1854, it was sold again to Cornwell & Weeden, who ran a stage every half hour during morning and evening hours, and hourly at other times of the day. In 1858 Mr. William Smith bought and ran the line until the introduction of the street-cars, July, 1860.

Street Cars Introduced.—The next great change which affected the rural character of the village was the introduction of the street cars into the village. Until the year 1857, Flatbush, although so near to Brooklyn, had nevertheless preserved its strictly rural character.

About 1848, Mr. Theodorus Polhemus, owner of most of the land on the hill, together with Mr. Churchill C. Cambrelling and others, initiated the project of opening Flatbush avenue, from Fulton avenue, Brooklyn, to the village of Flatbush. The line of the avenue had been previously surveyed in 1837, and map filed in Register's office. This project was bitterly opposed, for some reason, by the residents of Flatbush. Soon after, Judge Lefferts, and others, of Bedford, projected the opening of Fulton avenue to

Bedford. This proposition met with better success, and Fulton avenue was speedily laid out and opened for travel. Court street and Fifth avenue had been opened a few years previous to Gowanus, and thus an easy outlet was made for the city in these directions. Soon the city began to grow rapidly out toward its suburbs, lying to the east, west and north. There was no growth, however, toward the south, in the direction of Flatbush. These localities, Gowanus and East New York, though further from the City Hall than Flatbush, were nevertheless more easy of access. The long, tedious ride, by stage, over the hill, was a serious barrier to the growth of the city toward Flatbush. This had been, no doubt, in some measure, a benefit to the village; keeping back the tide of immigration which flooded the eastern section of the city, and preserving intact the woodlands which were afterwards purchased by the city for Prospect Park. In the spring of 1854, Flatbush avenue (surveyed in 1837) was laid out, graded and paved, from its junction with Fulton avenue, Brooklyn, to the city line, which at that time was a few hundred feet north of the present site of the Reservoir. In 1854, by Legislative enactment, N. B. Morse, John G. Bergen and Nicholas Stillwell were appointed commissioners to lay out and arrange for opening Flatbush avenue, from the city line to the present terminus of the village, at Malbone street. The line of the street was surveyed by Tunis G. Bergen in November, 1854, and a map filed in the Register's office. This portion of the avenue, however, was not opened to the public, until 1858, owing to the difficulty experienced by the commissioners in raising the assessment made for the improvement.

After the avenue was opened to the village, the Brooklyn City Railroad secured, in 1860, from the Plank-Road Company, a right of way through the village, and extended a single track (with a switch at Winthrop street) to the present depot at Vernon avenue. The first cars ran through to Flatbush in the latter part of July, 1860. Thus the serious barrier which, for two centuries, had separated Flatbush and Brooklyn, was removed; and the two localities were united, by iron bands, in a union never to be broken.

Streets Laid Out.—The first change in the original system of roads and streets (which had existed since 1654) was made in 1834, when Hon. Gerrit L. Martense bought a section of land 1,000 feet on East Broadway, and filed a map of thirty-eight lots in the Registrar's office, September 1, 1834. He opened two short streets, called Erasmus and Johnson streets. Here, six or eight English mechanics bought lots and built homes for themselves. The section has since been known as the "English neighborhood." For many years, however, the greater part of the land remained as commons, and these houses formed a secluded little hamlet, entirely isolated from the rest of the village. In 1835, Dr. Ad-

rian Vanderveer had his farm on the east side of Flatbush avenue, to the Clove Road (now Canarsie avenue), surveyed into city lots. He opened, at this time, Vernon avenue, and improved it by grading it and planting trees upon it from Flatbush Road to the Clove Road. He also laid out Lott, Prospect, Lawrence, Franklin and Clinton streets, and Bedford avenue; but these streets were not opened until 1867-68, and but little, if any, of the property was sold before that time. In 1837 a map was filed by John A. Scudder, of a section of the Cornelius Suydam farm, and a street (the continuation of the Clove Road, now Canarsie avenue) was opened through the property. (For a more detailed statement of this speculative movement see our account of the Holy Cross Cemetery). The next, and most decided change, was made in 1865, when a section of four acres of land, owned by the Reformed Church, was laid out in city lots, and Locust street opened through the property. This section was bounded on the north by East Broadway, east by Johnson street, and west by the land of Erasmus Hall Academy. This property found a ready sale, and a number of houses were soon erected upon it. Soon after, in 1867, Tunis J. Bergen, of Flatbush, purchased the Antonides farm, which adjoined the last named section on the south, and with a front on Flatbush road, and opened Union street through the center of the property, as far as Johnson street. Several years after, the Board of Improvement opened this street, from Flatbush Road to the Catholic Cemetery, and changed the name to Grant street. In a short time many of the streets laid down by Dr. Adrian Vanderveer, in his survey of 1834, were opened from East Broadway to Duryea's Lane, or to what is now called Avenue B. After the opening of these streets, buildings of all descriptions were rapidly put up; so that now, this once secluded little hamlet of "English neighborhood" has assumed the appearance of the suburbs of a large city.

The Village of Parkville.—In 1849 a company was formed, the "*Coney Island Plank-Road Company*;" a right of way was secured in 1850, and a road laid out from Brooklyn to Coney Island, passing through the western section of the town. Upon this road two sections of land were bought in 1851-52, and the *villages* of GREENFIELD and WINDSOR TERRACE were founded. On July 10, 1851, the trustees of the United Freeman's Association (who had formed a company under the act passed April 10, 1851) purchased 67 acres of land from Johnson Tredwell, and proceeded to lay out a village, to which they gave the name of *Greenfield*. In 1852 they purchased from the farm of Henry S. Ditmas, immediately adjoining on the south, another section; bringing up their whole purchase to about 114 acres, at the rate of \$500 per acre. These purchases were made by Charles Foster, Hezekiah Russell, John C. Myers, Charles A. Tilva, Wm. Stevens, Trustees of the association. The officers of the associ-

ation were John A. Lawrence, *President*; J. C. Valentine, *Vice-President*; Francis Webb, Harry L. Pelouze, John Hall, *Directors*; J. K. Raymond, Robert Smith, *Secretaries*.

In 1853 the association contracted to have the streets laid out and graded. Shade trees were planted along the sidewalks, and numerous public wells were dug upon the line of the streets, for the convenience of the residents. The association held control of the property, selling lots as demands were made for them. After a number of years the association closed up its affairs, the first section in 1854, the second about 1856; and each individual secured a deed for such property as he desired as his share. None of these deeds for any of the lots sold by the association were given by the association, but by the original owners, Johnson Tredwell and Henry S. Ditmas. The only member of the original association who still holds property and resides at Parkville, is Mr. Wm. H. Taylor, who, as the first settler, came to the village in 1852.

In 1853 a new road was opened and planked upon the southern boundary of the Greenfield purchase. This road, called the "Shortest Route to Coney Island," began at the Coney Island Plank Road, about 100 feet south of Mr. Teunis Bergen's residence, near what, according to the present system of streets, is the corner of Avenue H, and ran in a southwesterly direction, crossing the Boulevard at Avenue I. Continuing in same direction as far as the northwesterly corner of Washington Cemetery, at Avenue K, it there turned south and followed what is now Gravesend avenue. This road, according to Mr. John V. N. Bergen (to whom, as well as to Mr. Wm. H. Taylor, we are indebted for many facts in the history of Greenfield), was opened by the adjoining property owners, in order to make a direct route to the city for the residents of Gravesend.

In 1870 the name Greenfield was changed to PARKVILLE. The Post-Office had for some time been called *Cresco*, but the authorities at Washington saw fit to change the name to Parkville. Within a few years past the original village has been increased by purchases made at the east of the Coney Island Plank Road, along the line of Newkirk avenue. The first house in this section was put up by Mr. Joseph Stelle, who purchased a large tract of land. On the southwest, Mr. A. F. Johnson bought a portion of the farm of Abram Duryea, upon which he built several houses for sale, and laid out the section in city lots.

A portion of the John Ditmas farm, lying to the north of the village, was bought by Kingsland and Keeney, who afterward conveyed it to the "Butterick Pattern Company." This section of the village is as yet unimproved, the Congregational church being the only building thereon, at present.

During 1880-'81 an effort was made by Messrs. Wilder & Montgomery to secure an Act of Incorpora-

tion, a matter which is still agitated by some of the prominent residents of the village. There is now in the village a large and flourishing public school and five churches, of which we will speak more in detail when treating of the literary and ecclesiastical history of Flatbush.

The first settler upon the original purchase was Mr. William H. Taylor, who built the first house in 1852. Mr. E. McChesney erected a dwelling for himself in 1853. After this the number of inhabitants increased quite rapidly. Among these early settlers were D. I. Talt, Mr. Benton, J. P. Heath, J. Kershaw, J. Marquies, William Staites and William Matthews. The first house within the *present* limits of Parkville was erected in 1803 by Adrian Martense, the grandfather of Mr. Adrian Bergen. In 1836 Teunis Bergen, the brother of Adrian, built a house for himself upon land near the old homestead; and, in the year 1852, Mr. Adrian Bergen built a commodious residence upon his farm within the limits of Parkville, for his son John V. N. Bergen. Though not included in the *original* purchase, these residences are within the present limits of Parkville, and are the oldest houses in the locality. Their owners have been largely interested in the increase and welfare of the new village.

In the year 1860 the population was about 200, and the valuation of the property, real and personal, according to the assessment rolls, was \$62,450. In 1880 the population was about 525, and the valuation of property, real and personal, had reached the sum of \$161,280.

Hon. A. G. Hammond, a man of considerable prominence among the early settlers, was the *first post-master* of the village. Several of the residents of Parkville have been elected to hold offices in the general town government. Among these we find, of *Justices of the Peace*, the names of A. G. Hammond, 1852-1857; G. W. Close, 1863-1867; Wm. McMahon, 1877-1881; Andrew McKibbin, 1873-1877; and Daniel M. Cunniskey, *Justice of Sessions* for two years. Mr. William Staite held the office of Excise Commissioner from 1880-1883. J. PAULDING, for a long time resident of the village, was elected a member of the State Assembly, and was instrumental in securing the Act creating the Ocean Parkway. When this boulevard was laid out and graded it was necessary to remove the M. E. Church, the district school-house, the residence of Mr. J. V. N. Bergen, and several other private houses. By the opening of the boulevard or parkway the village was divided into two sections.

Windsor Terrace.—The same year in which the "United Freeman" founded Parkville, a tract of land on the Coney Island road, near the present city line, was purchased by Robert Bell, who immediately proceeded to lay out the village, afterward called WINDSOR TERRACE. This section was bounded on the east by the Coney Island road, 1,025 feet to land of

Thomas Murphy; south and west by the land of Thomas Murphy; north by the patent line of the City of Brooklyn. The land was originally the farm of John Vanderbilt, divided at his death between his two sons, John and Jeremiah. The dividing line of these two farms, which were purchased by Robert Bell, is Vanderbilt street. Mr. Bell subsequently reconveyed it to Edward Belknap, who laid out forty-seven building plots (each 100x150 feet) on each side of Seely street and north of Vanderbilt. On Adams street, south of Vanderbilt, the lots were only one hundred and eight feet deep. He laid down the following streets, since recognized by the town survey, viz.: *Seely, Vanderbilt* and *Adams*, as well as a short street not recognized by the town survey, but which now forms part of the present Prospect avenue. These streets were laid out at his expense.

In 1853 G. W. Brown, an extensive real estate operator and prominent builder of Brooklyn, purchased a number of the 100 feet lots on Vanderbilt and Adams streets. These, in 1855, he subdivided into 50 feet lots; and again, in 1860, into 25 feet lots. In 1854 Brown made an agreement with the "Windsor Terrace Land Association" to convey to them these sections. This was the origin of the "Windsor Terrace Land Association," the name being first assumed when Brown agreed to sell these lots. The association had no charter, but existed only in name, and for the purpose of carrying out the agreement between Brown and the members, to convey land to them from the original owners of the fee. No land was conveyed to the association as such, but to individual members, as they wished it; and thus the agreement made with Brown, according to a record made by him in the Register's office, was carried out, for no such legally chartered body existed as the "Windsor Terrace Land Association."

After the village was laid out, Belknap erected six houses, and filed a map of the place in the Register's office, which he called "Map of Pleasant Cottage Sites." Those on Seely street were purchased by W. Ward Watkins, J. McNaught and George Hudson. Those on Vanderbilt street were taken by Theodore Magnus, James Hardie and Dundas Dick. Three public wells were dug upon Adams, Vanderbilt and Seely streets. After these improvements were completed, Belknap caused the whole property to be sold by separate plots in open market. As the village lies upon the southern slope of the hills, the streets on its northern boundary required a great amount of grading in order to secure a uniform grade. While the streets running from north to south have quite a steep descent, those lying east and west, having a nearly level grade, rise one above another, in the manner of terraces. This gives to the settlement a most picturesque appearance, appropriately suggestive of the name, "Windsor Terrace." In 1860 the population of this locality was about 20

persons. In 1880 it was about 185, while, at present, the old and new sections of the village comprise about 300 inhabitants.

The valuation of property in the original purchase was, in 1860, \$27,100; and, in 1880, it was \$105,055. A commodious chapel was erected in 1874, and a fine school-house in 1875.

The residents of Windsor Terrace who have held prominent positions in local and general government, are: C. C. Martin, Assistant Engineer of the Brooklyn Bridge; Michael E. Finnegan, Searcher in Register's office, Brooklyn, and for many years Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Democratic General Committee of the County, and at one time delegate to State Democratic Convention; James Hardie, Justice of the Peace; Wm. E. Murphy, Assessor and Police Commissioner, and Theodore Magnus, Excise Commissioner. To Mr. Finnegan we are largely indebted for facts relative to this village.

Flatbush Fire Engine Company.—One of the oldest village organizations is the *Flatbush Engine Company*, authorized under a special law in 1821. But little is known of the company until 1825. Then Mr. Kellogg, principal of the academy, was instrumental in securing its thorough organization. The first foreman was Mr. Isaac Cortelyou. Through Mr. Kellogg's assistance, an engine was procured from Connecticut. This first engine was constructed somewhat after the form of the present garden engine. It consisted of a square box, as a reservoir, in which was placed a large force pump with two long arms, and the whole arrangement mounted on two wheels, giving it the appearance of a cart. It was called the "Cart Engine," and, in case of fire, was drawn by a horse to the locality needed. It could be worked by six or eight men, but was not a suction engine, merely a force pump; consequently the majority of the company, and all the men that could be induced to assist, formed two lines and passed water in leather buckets, with which the company were well supplied, in order to keep the box, or reservoir, of the engine full of water. At the time of the burning of the Court House, in 1832, in the absence of the foreman, Mr. John J. Vanderbilt, inexperienced parties had passed water in these buckets from a neighboring duck pond. Soon the valves became choked with mud and the engine rendered temporarily useless. The engine was sold to A. R. & S. H. Fox, and was instrumental, on several occasions, in saving their glass works at Sand Lake, New York, from destruction. The second engine was purchased at New Haven, Conn., where it had been in use for some years, until, on the occasion of a serious disturbance between the students of the college and the firemen, the engine was somewhat injured. It was bought by the town for \$800, and repaired at a moderate expense. This engine was of much more modern construction than the "Cart Engine," having four wheels

and parallel arms on the side. It was both a suction and forcing engine." It was called "*Washington No. 1*," and the number of members of the company limited by law. In 1861, through the influence of Hon. John Vanderbilt, the law was amended so as to allow the number to be increased to 25 firemen, who after a service of eight years were to be exempt from jury and military duty. In October, 1863, the company undertook the canvass of the town to raise, by subscription, means to purchase a new engine. Messrs. Abraham Lott, John Lefferts and Nelson Hamlin were appointed the committee for the purpose; and the amount was raised upon the understanding that it would be refunded to the subscribers, if the Legislature would pass a bill making it a town charge. \$2,100 was thus raised. In 1864 the Legislature passed an act authorizing town bonds, to the amount of \$6,000, for the purpose of purchasing a new engine and erecting a new engine-house. A new engine and hose were bought at a cost of \$2,382. The total expense for engine and house was \$6,011.75. In 1872 a bell-tower was erected at the rear of the engine-house, and a fine large bell hung in it by the town. False alarms, however, were so frequently sounded, that in 1881 the town authorities ordered the bell to be taken down and properly hung in the tower of the new Town Hall. The first building used as an engine-house was situated in the grave-yard at the rear of the Reformed Church and faced on Church Lane. It was built originally as a town guard-house, and also for a house in which to keep the bier, used in carrying the dead to the grave, before hearses were brought into use in the village. On April 21, 1865, the company purchased a large flag, and on May 1, 1865, Mr. Henry Wall presented the company with a flag-staff about 100 feet high. The pole and flag were raised June 3, 1865, in front of their new engine-house. Formerly such a flag-staff, called "The Liberty Pole," stood for many years in the center of East Broadway, at its junction with Flatbush road. The first *trustees* were David Johnson, Michael Schoonmaker and Jonathan Kellogg. The members of the present Board of Trustees are John Lefferts, Abraham Lott, Wm. S. Schoonmaker, J. P. Vanderveer and Henry Ditmas. The following is as accurate a list of the company's *foremen* as can be gleaned from the company's very imperfect records, and with the aid of Justice Peter Pigott, the secretary of the company, and Mr. Abram Lott, President of the trustees: Isaac Cortelyou, 1821-'30; John J. Vanderbilt, 1830-'33; Isaac Cortelyou, 1833-'42; John D. Prince, 1842-'60; Abraham Lott, 1860-'62; John L. Bergen, 1862-'69; Theodore B. Alston, 1869-'73; Joseph S. Story, 1874-'75; Adrian Bergen, 1875-'76; John McElvery, 1876-'79; Chas. McKinney, 1879-'82.

Masonic Lodge.—During the Winter of 1860-1, a number of Masons, resident in Flatbush and Parkville, secured from the Grand Lodge of the State, a

dispensation (March, 1861) and warrant (dated June 16, 1861) for a lodge, called *Kings County Lodge, No. 511, P. and A. M.* The charter members were: Wm. Matthews, F. L. Dallou, John V. N. Bergen, Jonath. Longmire, H. Brown, Jr., Henry Wall, J. Sutherland, J. G. Smith, W. H. Hubbard, Jas. J. Foden. The lodge was duly organized by the election of the following *officers*: Wm. Matthews, *W. Master*; Francis L. Dallou, *S. Warden*; John V. N. Bergen, *Jr. Warden*. From its organization until the present, the following persons have been its *W. Masters* (some serving two or more terms): Wm. Matthews, F. L. Dallou, Henry Wall, Abraham Lott, Homer L. Bartlett, M. D., Adrian Vanderveer, Rev. Corn. L. Wells, D. D., Henry G. Marshall, Wm. P. De Forest, Wm. L. Keese. Its present officers are Wm. Matthews, *W. M.*, Henry J. Johnson, *S. W.*, and John Kerswell, *Jr.*, *W.*, and H. L. Bartlett, *Treas.* The lodge rooms are in Schoonmaker Hall, Flatbush. Until about 1875 the lodge held communications weekly, but since then twice a month. It now numbers sixty-five members, and its work and influence in the village has been creditable to itself and beneficial to the community.

Flatbush Gas Company.—The introduction of gas for illuminating purposes was a new era in the history of the village. The dense foliage of the village rendered locomotion, upon moonless nights, not only difficult, but to a greater or less degree dangerous. In order to obviate this evil, a number of the residents, about the year 1860, procured frames of street lamps and placed them upon suitable posts, along the street line, in front of their dwellings. In them were placed large kerosene lamps. These lamps were attended to daily, and lighted each dark night, by the family in front of whose residence they were placed. This attempt at street-lighting, imperfect as it was, gradually emphasized in the mind of prominent citizens, the necessity for a more perfect system; especially as, after the novelty of the thing had somewhat worn away, many neglected to light them. In the Winter of 1863-64 the matter was much discussed, and on April 14, 1864, the *Flatbush Gas Company* was formed, with a capital of \$40,000.00. Eight hundred shares were issued at \$50 per share; subsequently the capital was increased \$15,000.00 by the issue of three hundred more shares at \$50 per share. The charter members of the company were: Hon. John A. Lott, John J. Vanderbilt, Wm. Brown, Jr., Henry Wall, John Lefferts, J. V. B. Martense, and J. Furman Neefus. The first officers of the company were, Hon. John A. Lott, President; J. Furman Neefus, Secretary; John Lefferts, Treasurer. In 1872 there were twenty-two street lamps which were lighted at a cost of \$17.00 a year for each light. The company then had seven miles of mains, and a capacity for supplying thirty thousand cubic feet of gas every day. At first, consumers were charged \$4 per thousand feet, which rate was subsequently reduced to three

dollars. The company now have 200 street lamps and nine miles of mains, and supply a large majority of the residences in the village. The present officers of the company are John J. Vanderbilt, President; Abram I. Ditmas, Secretary, to whom we are indebted for these facts; John Lefferts, Treasurer. W. S. Burnett has acted as Superintendent of the Gas Works since their first construction.

Board of Improvement.—Until 1871 there was no competent and legally appointed body, other than the Commissioners of Highways, to whom the care of the streets and avenues of the town could be intrusted. If new streets were opened the work was undertaken by the property owners on either side of the proposed street, who were thus not only compelled to give the land for public convenience, but also to incur the expenses of opening. This, in itself, might not be considered an unjust burden upon the property, where the street was opened at the free will of the owners for its improvement. When, however, by act of the legislature, the whole county was surveyed and mapped into streets, Flatbush, being situated near to the city, a demand soon arose for the opening of many of these projected streets, whether the owners of the property desired it or not. To avoid endless contentions and secure justice to all, as well as to prevent this important matter from falling into the hands of mere scheming politicians, at whose hands the property-holders would be fleeced, it was necessary that some competent Board should be appointed, whose special business it should be to attend to this whole interest of opening streets in the town and laying assessments. Foreseeing this, the Hon. John A. Lott had already prepared a law providing for this important interest of the town. Through his instrumentality an act passed the legislature April 19, 1871, providing for the creation of a Board of Improvement for the Town of Flatbush. The act was entitled "An act providing for the opening and improvement of new roads and avenues, and closing old highways in the town of Flatbush, Kings County." It provided for "a board composed of seven residents of the town of Flatbush, to be called *The Board of Improvement of the Town of Flatbush*, the members indicated being John A. Lott, Philip S. Crooke, Jacob V. B. Martense, John Lefferts, John J. Vanderbilt, John L. Zabriskie, M. D., and Abraham I. Ditmas. The members of the board were to hold office for five years; vacancies through resignation or death to be filled by the President of the Board, the Supervisor and the Town Clerk. The successors of those who have held office for five years to be appointed by the Supervisor, Town Clerk, and the Assessor of the town having the shortest term to serve (Chap. 567 of the Laws of 1871). In accordance with this act, the *Board of Improvement* was organized April 20, 1872; Hon. John A. Lott, *President*; Abram I. Ditmas, *Treasurer*, and Lefferts Vanderbilt, *Clerk*. Upon the death of Hon.

John A. Lott, July, 1878, Gen. Philip S. Crooke was elected president, August 12, 1878, and Mr. Abraham Lott was appointed a member of the board to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of his father. After the death of General Crooke, in the Spring of 1881, Mr. Abraham Lott succeeded to the Presidency of the Board. Mr. Wm. E. Murphy was appointed April 18, 1881 in the place of General Philip S. Crooke. During the ten years of its existence, the Board of Improvement has accomplished much toward the permanent improvement and development of the town, and has saved thousands of dollars to the inhabitants of the village.

Through the assistance of the Clerk of the Board we are able to give a summary of the result of the work for ten years, since the organization of the Board. They have opened and improved Franklin avenue, from the city line to Washington avenue. They were next called upon to open and improve Malbone street, from Flatbush avenue to New York avenue. These were important and expensive improvements and by the careful management of the Board many thousands of dollars were saved to the town. They have also opened and improved the following streets and sections of streets, viz.: Caton avenue to the Coney Island road; a section of Nostrand avenue; Grant street to Camarsie avenue; Lefferts avenue to New York avenue; a section of East New York avenue; Avenue B, from Flatbush avenue to the western town boundary line; Vanderbilt street; Albany avenue, and closing the Clove road from East New York avenue. The erection of a suitable building for a Town Hall was committed to their charge. In the successful completion of this work we have a lasting monument of the faithfulness with which these gentlemen discharged their duties as members of the Board of Improvement. There is no provision in the law for a salary to the members of the Board. The members have cheerfully given their services and time for the welfare of the village.

First Village Newspaper.—In the year 1872, a proposition was made to Mr. H. J. Egleston that he should undertake the editorship of a village paper. He consented; and, on April 20, 1872, the first copy of the *Kings County Rural Gazette* was issued. The first edition (of 2000 copies), was given away among the inhabitants of Flatbush and the neighboring towns. A demand immediately arose for its continuance; yearly subscriptions came in rapidly, and in four weeks the size was increased. After several enlargements, it is now a respectable sized sheet of twenty-eight by forty-two inches. Mr. Egleston's interest was bought out in 1873, and a joint stock company formed with a capital stock of \$4,000, since increased to \$10,000. Mr. H. J. Egleston was elected president of the company, and has since continued to be its editor and manager, with Mr. Wm. B. Green as associate editor. For a long time the issue averaged 1000 copies per week, but for

several years past has been about 2000 per week. For several months the office was at the drug-store of Wm. H. Douglas, corner of Clarkson street and Flatbush avenue, and the paper was printed in Brooklyn. In course of time building-lots were secured on the corner of Diamond street, and a small gothic building, purchased from the Willink estate, was moved to and located upon the corner of Diamond street. The company now own a large steam power press, 31x48, a large Gordon job press, and a nine-horse power engine. Six compositors are constantly employed. Two weekly papers,—the "*Rural and Brighton Gazette*," and the "*American Business Journal*,"—are issued by the company. The paper has exercised considerable influence in local matters, and many village improvements were first suggested, discussed and brought to completion, largely through its influence. During the first year of its existence, the subject of a local telegraph company was frequently discussed in its columns.

Flatbush Telegraph Company.—In the Autumn of this year, 1872, H. J. Egleston published a card calling a public meeting to consider the subject of the establishment of a village telegraph. This meeting and two subsequent ones were largely attended, at which stock was subscribed to the amount of \$3,000, and a company was forthwith organized. Hon. John A. Lott, John Lefferts, Wm. Matthews, R. L. Schoonmaker and H. J. Egleston were elected *Directors*; Hon. John A. Lott was chosen *President*; H. J. Egleston, *Secretary*, and John Lefferts, *Treasurer*. A contract was made with the Western Union Telegraph Company to construct and work the line. Miss F. K. Pike, was the first operator. The first message was sent June 21, 1873, by Mr. John Lefferts to Hon. John A. Lott, who then, as a member of the Court of Appeals, was staying temporarily at Congress Hall, Albany, N. Y. The message read as follows: "See 3rd Epistle of St. John, 13th and 14th verses." The second message was from the editor of the *Rural Gazette* to the editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, viz: "Flatbush, the banner-town of the county, is annexed by telegraph." There were originally sixty shares at \$50 a share. The interest upon the invested capital pays the deficiency of \$200 in the annual income of the office. Thus another bond was formed which unites the town to the city, and to the great world beyond. An attempt was made during this year to strengthen this bond of union.

Annexation Question.—The subject of the *annexation of the county towns to the City of Brooklyn* was earnestly discussed in the papers of Brooklyn and by the various local newspapers of the county towns. During the Winter of 1872-73, the subject was brought before the legislature of the State; and, in June 28, 1873, an annexation act was passed. According to this law (Chap. 861 of the Laws of the State, for 1873), a call was issued for the supervisors to meet and appoint commissioners who were to draft a plan for con-

solidation. They were required to assemble on (or before) the first Monday of August, 1873, and appoint five commissioners, one for each county-town; who, with six commissioners to be appointed by the Mayor of Brooklyn, were to form a Board of Commissioners of Annexation. The law provided that they should meet on the second Monday of August, 1873, and begin their work of drafting a plan for the consolidation of the county-towns, and their annexation to the City of Brooklyn. The Mayor and Board of Supervisors met on the last Monday in July, 1873, and named the Commissioners, as directed in the act of legislature. The Mayor appointed, to act on the part of the city, J. N. Wyckoff, Jr., E. J. Lowber, A. G. Bayliss, Edmund Briggs, George C. Bennett and George L. Fox. The appointments of the Supervisors were: Hon. John A. Lott for *Flatbush*; C. Warren Hamilton, for *New Lots*; Peter Lott, for *Flatlands*; William Bennett, for *Gravesend*, and Tennis G. Bergen, for *New Utrecht*. On Monday, August 11, the commissioners held their first meeting for organization. The Hon. John A. Lott was chosen *President*; W. G. Bishop, *Clerk*; and Stephen Ryder, *Sergeant-at-Arms*. The duty assigned to the commissioners was a most difficult one, viz., the amicable arrangement and harmonizing of many important and conflicting public interests. The first demand came from the county-towns, requiring a charter which would give to them equal rights. At the meeting of August 30, a new difficulty presented itself. While the towns and city might be consolidated under one corporation, still the county, although wholly embraced within the proposed city limits, must also have its representative officers. Thus two boards of officers would be employed in governing the same territory, a presumable cause of future conflict of jurisdiction. A third difficulty presented itself in relation to Flatbush and the Prospect Park lands. By an act of legislature, this land, lying within the limits of Flatbush village, and a part of Flatbush territory, had been made a portion of the City of Brooklyn against the will of the inhabitants, and in the face of their remonstrance to the legislature; and now the town would be called upon to bear an assessment and pay taxes upon the land of which it had been forcibly deprived. The same difficulty existed in the case of Flatbush and Gravesend in reference to the New Boulevard or Ocean Parkway, which had been taken in like manner by the county. The Flatbush representative was at first opposed to the movement; but becoming, at length, convinced that the matter could be satisfactorily arranged for all parties, he prepared an elaborate and comprehensive digest of the case, in all its bearings, and which was marked by incredible study, research and legal ability. To him alone belongs the credit of so presenting the matter as to secure a satisfactory settlement of the various and conflicting interests involved. The committee completed their labors in October; and

on November 4, 1873, the subject of annexation was submitted to the towns at the Fall elections. The result of the elections showed that the towns either did not thoroughly understand the subject, or were not prepared for annexation. The vote in Brooklyn gave a majority of twenty thousand in favor of it. The majority in the towns against it, however, was one thousand five hundred and sixty-eight on the whole number of votes in city and county. Thus ended the first attempt at a permanent union between the city and its rural neighbors.

Town Hall.—While this matter was under consideration, the subject of a Town Hall was repeatedly agitated in the local village paper. After the destruction of the County Court House, at Flatbush, great difficulty was experienced in finding a suitable place to hold the village courts, the town elections and other public meetings. For many years the elections were held at the hotels of the village; and the Justices held their courts either at their own houses, or in the parlor of one of the numerous hotels of the village. There being no place in which to confine prisoners, or persons awaiting trial, constables were compelled to take such persons to the jail in Brooklyn, and then return them for trial to the village. After the erection of the public school-house, in 1842, the elections and Justices Courts were held, for nearly twenty years, in its upper story. About the year 1861 it became necessary to use this room for school purposes. During this year Schoonmaker's Hall, on Flatbush avenue, was completed, and was used for ten years as a place for all public gatherings, church fairs, sessions of court and for election purposes. The discussion of this subject in the local paper brought the matter prominently before the public. A call for a public meeting to consider the subject of a Town Hall appeared in the *Rural Gazette* of February 14, 1874. Pursuant to this call a large and enthusiastic meeting of prominent citizens was held at Schoonmaker's Hall on Thursday, February 19, 1874, Supervisor J. V. B. Martense being *Chairman*, and Abraham Lott, *Secretary*; at which, after various motions and considerable discussion, the matter was referred to the Board of Improvement, with power, the expense for land and building being limited by resolution to \$40,000. At this meeting the town authorities were directed to issue thirty-year bonds, and provision was made for payment of interest and principal by taxation. The Board of Improvement immediately entered upon the accomplishment of the task assigned to them. A building committee, consisting of John Lefferts, John J. Vanderbilt and John L. Zabriskie, M. D., was appointed. Architect John Y. Cuyler was engaged to draft plans for the building. On May 18, 1874, the Board procured the enactment of a law authorizing them to proceed legally in their work (Chap. 456 of Laws of 1874 of State of N. Y.) A section of land (100 feet front and 200 feet deep)

was purchased on Grant street (then Union Place) two hundred feet east of Flatbush avenue, at a cost of \$5,800. The contract was let to Wm. Vause for \$29,000, the building to be completed September 1, 1875. Though not completed, the building was nevertheless used on November 2, 1875, for the annual fall election. On February 7, 1876, the new Town Hall was formally transferred by the Board of Improvement to the town authorities. On this occasion a large and enthusiastic meeting was held. The formal transfer was made by Hon. J. A. Lott in an able address, a portion of which, in these days of robbery in high places, is worthy of historical record, and is as follows: "It was found, on adjustment and settling of the interest realized on the money deposited in the bank, and in making up the final account, that the said expenditure exceeded the sum of forty thousand dollars borrowed, and the interest realized thereon, by the amount of ninety-eight dollars. That excess was *paid by the seven members of the Board, out of their own pockets*, in equal sums, to the Treasurer, who was thus enabled to defray and pay the entire expenditure incurred without leaving any outstanding indebtedness therefor, beyond the amount authorized by the law under which the Board acted."

Temperance Societies.—For many years prominent citizens had interested themselves in the securing of good government for the town and in the suppression of Intemperance. Now and again, up to the year 1875, temperance societies had been organized and efforts made to control the terrible evil. During the year 1870 a temperance society was organized and chartered, with a large membership, by the name of *Golden Star Division No. 459, Sons of Temperance*. The society continued in active operation for several years. In December, 1871, the *Father Matthew Total Abstinence Benevolent Society of the Church of the Holy Cross* was founded, which is still in existence, having fifty-eight members, with James McCarthy as *President*, Maurice Dwyer, *Vice-President*; Edward Mackey, Andrew Short and Michael Murphy, *Secretaries*, and F. Bollinger, *Treasurer*. Through the influence of these agencies the subject of the proper execution of the excise laws was frequently brought before the public. Under the auspices of the "Golden Star Division," several public meetings were held, at which this, and kindred subjects, were discussed. In hearty sympathy with the work of the societies, a call was issued by a number of prominent citizens, not members of these organizations, for a public meeting to be held at Schoonmaker's Hall, July 5, 1873. The call invited "All the people of Flatbush who wished to have Excise Laws in relation to licenses and the sale of liquor on the Sabbath," to meet and discuss the subject.

Excise Commissioners Appointed.—As a result of this meeting a committee was appointed, through whose agency a law (Chap. 444, Laws of 1874) was passed in 1874, providing for the organization of a

Board of Excise Commissioners for the town of Flatbush. Licenses previously had been granted by the Town Board, consisting of the Town Supervisor and Justices of the Peace. In accordance with the law, the new board was organized April 22, 1875. Abram J. Van Dyke, E. H. Steers and Michael Kennedy were chosen as *Commissioners*. The Board organized with A. J. Van Dyke as *President*, E. H. Steers, *Secretary*, and Michael Kennedy as *Treasurer*. The law required that the Commissioners should meet on the first Monday in May, in each year, to organize; and once a month thereafter to grant licenses. The salary was fixed at three dollars for each commissioner for every meeting thus attended. The following list comprises the names of members of the Board from 1876-'82, viz.: 1876, E. H. Steers, A. J. Van Dyke and Felix McGloin; 1877, A. J. Van Dyke, J. Quevedo, E. H. Steers; 1878, J. Quevedo, E. H. Steers, James Haywood; 1879, E. H. Steers, Henry Cook, James Haywood; 1880-'82, James Haywood, Henry Cook, Wm. Staite. Under the former plan, when the matter was under control of the Town Board in 1873, there were fifty saloons in the town in which liquor was openly sold in violation of law every day in the week. There were only seventeen licenses issued for the whole town. Apparently there was no desire, and no power, on the part of the Town Board to enforce the law. In 1872 thirty licenses were granted; and, in 1874, before the Excise Board was organized, only ten out of the sixty saloons in the town were licensed. During the first year of the new Excise Board twenty-seven places were licensed and a large number of the unlicensed compelled to cease selling. The check given to unlicensed liquor traffic by this new excise law was, however, but temporary. Watchful of their interest, the saloon-keepers soon understood that the Excise Commissioners did not intend to disturb them. The completion of two additional street railroads to the city line, the increased travel upon the Ocean Parkway, the opening of the Brighton Beach Railroad and the enforcement of the excise laws in the City of Brooklyn, were agencies which brought to the village, on Sabbath and all holidays, thousands of people, a large proportion of whom were patrons of liquor saloons. "Hotels" sprung up like mushrooms on every side. Houses of ill-fame increased with alarming rapidity on the Boulevard and vicinity. The village seemed in a fair way to be over-run by the crowds of pleasure-seeking, drinking, lawless Sabbath-breakers, that had placed all laws at defiance in at least two of the other villages in the County.

Law and Order Association.—In the year 1880 there were 52 licensed liquor saloons and a large number of unlicensed places, making an average of one saloon to every 150 residents, counting men, women and children, within a radius of less than half a mile from the south-west entrance of the Park. On the Coney Island road were six houses of ill-fame. At this

crisis, Mr. C. C. Martin, engineer of Brooklyn Bridge, who had been fighting this evil alone on the West Side of the town for a year, conceived the plan of a Law and Order Association for the town of Flatbush. At his call a number of the most prominent citizens met, May 10, 1880, at the residence of Mr. William Matthews, and organized the "*Law and Order Association of the town of Flatbush*," the aim of which was: (1). To prevent indiscriminate granting of licenses in violation of law; (2). To enforce observance of law in relation to persons holding licenses, especially the law in relation to sale of liquor on the Sabbath; (3). To enforce the law which prohibits sale without license; (4). To enforce the law in relation to houses of ill-repute; (5). To take all legal means by advice of counsel to accomplish their ends. Rev. C. L. Wells was chosen *President*, Mr. C. C. Martin, *Secretary*, and Mr. John Lefferts, *Treasurer*, who were all re-elected at the end of the year. The sum of \$900 was subscribed for carrying on the work of the association, counsel was immediately employed, and active operations begun. As a result of the first year's work, the number of licenses was reduced from fifty-two to thirty-eight "hotel," and two "beer" licenses. All the disreputable houses (six) have been closed and the occupants driven out of the town; and several subsequent attempts at their re-establishment have been frustrated by the vigilance of the association. Eleven convictions were secured for violation of excise law, and six liquor saloons have been closed.

The association numbers thirty-six members and bids fair to be of great service to the future welfare of the town. With the increase of liquor saloons, and the influx of an army of undesirable visitors upon holidays, Saturdays and Sabbath days, drunkenness and crime was rapidly upon the increase in the town. The local constables were of little avail in maintaining the law and good order upon these days. They were also utterly unable to protect the property of the residents of the village against the depredations of thieves who made frequent incursions into the village at night. For several years a number of the inhabitants upon the Main Avenue subscribed a sufficient sum to employ three or four private watchmen who patrolled the village every night. Through these men frequent arrests were made and some slight protection afforded at night. The need of a local Police Board and a regular police force became every year more evident.

Police Commissioners Appointed.—In the Fall of 1877 the matter was taken in hand by Mr. John Lefferts, Homer L. Bartlett, M. D., and Michael E. Finnegan. A bill framed by Michael E. Finnegan was taken by him to Albany, and on January 12, 1878, was passed by the legislature. This law authorized the organization of a *Police Board* and gave to them certain powers necessary to enable them to afford a competent police force and protection to the village. Through the kind-

ness of Mr. J. Z. Lott, the Clerk of the Board, we have obtained the following facts. According to the provisions of the act, the Board was to consist of five members, appointed by the Supervisors and Justices of the Peace. The first members of this Board were: Homer L. Bartlett, M. D., five years; Wm. E. Murphy, four years; John Z. Lott, three years; John Lefferts, two years; and Michael Kelly, one year. On June 19, 1878, these gentlemen met and organized, according to the law, as *Police Commissioners for the Town of Flatbush*. Homer L. Bartlett, M. D., was chosen *President*; John Z. Lott, *Clerk*; Wm. E. Murphy, *Treasurer*. They immediately organized a regularly constituted police force, of which James Byrne was appointed Sergeant; having under his control seven men. These men were expected, however, to accomplish an almost impossible task. They were to thoroughly protect a section of country about two miles square, composed of three distinct villages, nearly a mile apart. To do this, they must travel every night over a tract of country, surrounded by open fields, affording easy means of escape for a host of burglars, had they been disposed to plan their attacks upon the houses of the residents, when they knew the policeman in the district was far distant. Under the efficient management of the gentlemen who compose the Board, very much, however, has been accomplished; and the (wholly inadequate) force has been used to the very best possible advantage. With more means at their disposal, a very much more perfect system of protection of property could be carried out. The fact that a very large proportion of the houses are furnished with Holmes' Burglar Alarm has been of great assistance to the police, enabling each man to undertake the patrol of so large a district each night. As a result of their three years work, there were 336 arrests the first year; in the second year there were 450; in the third 429. The expenses of the Board are met by special tax, taken to the amount of \$9,000 the first year, and \$5,000 each year afterward. This amount is wholly inadequate to the successful accomplishment of the purpose designed by the law organizing the Board.

The present officers of the Board are John Lefferts, *President*; Wm. E. Murphy, *Treasurer*; John Z. Lott, *Clerk*. The law provides that all members appointed after the expiration of the term of the first Board shall hold office five years, and that their successors shall be appointed by the Supervisors and the Justices of the Peace. Mr. Lefferts was appointed in 1880 for five years; Mr. Kelly for four years; Mr. Lott re-appointed in 1881, for five years. The members of the Board receive no compensation for their services. No better evidence of the law-abiding character of the citizens of Flatbush—for which they have been justly noted for two hundred years—can be offered, than the fact that seven policemen can thus watch a rural district nearly two miles square, a suburb of one of the largest cities of the Union, and so well protect the interests of all. The

arrests and imprisonments, in almost every instance, are for offences committed by outsiders, coming into the village; or of persons residing upon the outskirts of the village near the city limits. The village has always been noted as a well-governed, law-abiding and patriotic locality. During the War of the Revolution many of its inhabitants enlisted in the Federal Army, and large sums of money were raised for the American cause. In the late Civil War a number of its citizens entered the Army of the Union, some of them serving for the whole term of the war. Much was done and comparatively large sums of money raised in the village, for the various relief committees. There is now in active operation here a Post of the *Grand Army of the Republic*.

Flatbush Water Works.—As early as 1853, James I. Murdock, of Flatbush, proposed a plan for supplying Flatbush and Brooklyn with an unlimited water-supply, by forming large basins at Flatland (excavated to the depth of the water-floor under this part of the island) from which the water could be pumped by suitable apparatus into a general reservoir on Prospect Hill. Discussions on this point did not take any definite shape until the spring of 1881, when Benjamin F. Stephens, of Brooklyn, was engaged—the necessary surveys having been made—by the B., F. and C. I. R. R. Co., to build water-works at Sheepshead Bay. He carried into practice Mr. Murdock's theory with success, and procured our unlimited water-supply. Through the active interest of Mr. John Lefferts, Treasurer of the R. R. Co., who associated with him Mr. John Matthews, John Z. Lott, and others, a company was formed for supplying the village with water. Its members were, in addition to those already named, William W. Wicks, *President*; Aaron S. Robbins, *Treasurer*; Benjamin F. Stephens, N. Cooper; Mr. Lott being *Secretary*, and Jeremiah Lott, *General Superintendent*. The money necessary for the immediate prosecution of the work was loaned by W. W. Wicks and A. S. Robbins, on bonds issued by the company. The stock has never been placed upon the market. Land was procured at the southern boundary of the town, at Paerdegat Pond, near what was formerly "Little Flats"—the lowest point in the village and the only one where surface springs of purest water abound. The water in the wells of this vicinity is of an entirely different character from that in the Northern section of the village, near the hills. The Paerdegat water is very soft and wholly free from any trace of mineral or vegetable matter; while that of the wells in the north section of the village, near the hills, is hard and impregnated with iron and lime. Having secured the necessary authority, the Company, during the summer of 1881, sank twelve wells—placed in a series of three—stretching over a tract of 1,300 feet, east and west, and directly across the water-course which underlies the Island. These wells were connected by 2,400 feet of suction pipe (

to 24 inches diameter), in such manner that they could be drawn from by the pumps, singly, or in any desired combination. During the winter of 1881-'82 about ten miles of mains were laid. A reservoir-tower, 100 feet high and 20 in diameter, standing on a concrete base of 98 feet above the lowest part of the town, was erected on high ground at the north end of the town, on Washington avenue, near Malbone street. The engines and pumps, especially constructed according to Mr. Stephens' patent, have a pumping capacity of 2,000,000 gallons per day. The pumping mains are 20 and 16 inches. The wells, which are 35 feet deep (with a depth of 26 feet of water), are built with water-tight walls, which effectually prevents any surface-water from entering them; and secures, also, a supply of perfectly pure water.

Healthfulness of the Village.—Flatbush has always maintained an exceptional reputation for healthfulness, to which the gravestones in the village burying-ground bear testimony. A very large proportion of those buried here were persons over fifty years of age. There is a row of stones, eleven in number, marking the graves of one family-connection, of whom all but two were over 63. The aggregate of their ages was 774 years; and seven of them were over 80, and one over 90. Along the edge of the woods, near the base of the hills, ague prevailed in former days, arising from the undrained ponds within the woods lying in the limits of Brooklyn. And the changes consequent on the formation and improvement of Prospect Park, the excavations for its lake, etc., caused, at the time, a considerable outbreak of malarial disease. But, since the completion of the Park, this source of trouble has been dissipated, and the most prominent physicians of the town declare that there has been *during the past two years scarcely a case of well-defined malaria in their practice, within the village.*

Board of Health.—The first local Board of Health was organized by Dr. John B. Zabriskie, July 24, 1832, and consisted of *Supervisor* John Wyckoff; John R. Snedecker and Henry S. Ditmas, *Overseers of the Poor*; David Johnson and John A. Lott, *Justices of the Peace*; Dr. Adrian Vanderveer, *Health Officer*, with whom were associated Drs. J. B. Zabriskie, Robert Edmond and William D. Creed. Several years ago, a law was enacted establishing a Village Board of Health on the same basis as the Metropolitan Board of Health, but its duties have always been light, confined to the enforcing of ordinary sanitary regulations, the recording of vital statistics, etc.; and, at no time has it been called upon to deal with epidemics. The present members of the Board are *Supervisor* Peter Williamson, *President*; *Justices* Peter Pigott, Christian Wulff, Thomas H. Glass, William McMahon; *Town Clerk* Henry Vanderveer; *Citizen* John Z. Lott. The Board is organized with John L. Zabriskie, M. D., *Health Officer*; William Gaynor, *Counsel*.

Ecclesiastical, the Reformed (Dutch) Church. [The peculiar collegiate relation of the churches of the five Dutch Towns of Kings County, renders it necessary, in order to avoid repetition, that this portion of their history should be considered as a whole. This has been done in our chapter on the *Ecclesiastical History of Kings County from 1654 to 1800*. The facts which Mr. STRONG has gathered in relation to the Reformed Dutch Church of FLATBUSH will, therefore, be found carefully preserved, and inwrought in that chapter.—EDITOR.]

At the beginning of the present century, as will be seen by reference to that chapter, the Rev. MARTINUS SCHOONMAKER, and the Rev. PETER LOWE, were colleagues in the charge of the Kings County churches.

Rev. Mr. Lowe continued pastor until his death in 1818. He was buried at Flatbush, but his remains were, in 1875, removed to Greenwood and placed in the lot purchased by the Reformed Church of Flatbush. These lots were purchased on May 17, 1873, for the use of the pastors of the church. The total cost for lots and fencing was \$1,850. The churches of Flatbush and Flatlands then united in calling the Rev. WALTER MONTEITH, who was installed in 1819, but resigned his charge in the following year and accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church at Schenectady, New York. The church remained without a pastor until 1822, when the Rev. THOMAS M. STRONG, D. D., was called and installed on November 17th of that year. The house near Vernon avenue, formerly used as a parsonage, having been sold, the consistory erected a commodious parsonage-house upon a lot nearly opposite the church, and immediately adjoining the Academy. This was a single frame house, two-stories and an attic. The Rev. Martinus Schoonmaker continued to reside in the old parsonage next the church until the time of his death, May 20th, 1824. He had been a faithful and efficient pastor over the congregation for nearly forty years. After his death, the collegiate bond which had existed for so many years between the Dutch churches was finally dissolved. The Rev. Dr. STRONG continued pastor of the church at Flatbush until June 14, 1861, when, having served the congregation faithfully for thirty-nine years, he died at the age of 64 years. As a token of their love and esteem the consistory caused a beautiful tablet to be erected to his memory and placed in the west wall of the church, beside the pulpit. He was interred in the village church-yard, and his remains, in 1875, were removed by the consistory to the church lot in Greenwood Cemetery. Dr. Strong was a man possessed of traits of character eminently fitting him for the work of the ministry. A man of enlarged views, he was always active in every good work in his own congregation, and in those enterprises intended for the extension of the cause of Christ abroad. He gave his best energies to the church over which he ministered, and to the denomination at large. He was clerk of the

General Synod of the Reformed Church for thirty-four years ; and, through his intimate knowledge of church matters, was appealed to as authority on ecclesiastical law in the denomination. During the last sickness of Dr. Strong, which continued for three years, the consistory engaged his son, the Rev. Robert G. Strong, to act as colleague and assistant. After Dr. Strong's death his pulpit was supplied for about two years by the Rev. William W. Howard, Principal of Erasmus Hall Academy.

In April, 1863, the Rev. CORNELIUS L. WELLS, of Jersey City, was called to the pastorate, which he now fills. Thus, during a period of two hundred and twenty-eight years, sixteen pastors have been settled over the congregation. Of this number two served the church for nearly forty years, and nine of the number died while in its active service.

from Mr. Henry Crabb, who for many years had a large organ-factory in the village; at one time at the rear of the Allgeo house in East Broadway, and in latter years in Clarkson St. The old round box-pulpit, mounted on five or six columns about five feet high, and entered by two circular stairways with banisters on each side, was removed, and a more modern pulpit erected in its place. The old pulpit was given to the First German Reformed Dutch Church, corner of Herkimer street and Howard avenue, Brooklyn. The crimson satin curtain, at the back of the pulpit, representing the rising sun, was replaced by a large painting on canvas intended to give the appearance of heavy curtains looped up in elegant style. The impression, however, at a short distance, was rather suggestive of a gathering storm-cloud ready to hurl its thunderbolts upon the assemblage. In 1861, while the pulpit was



The Neefus House.

FLATBUSH CHURCH, 1842.

The Zabriskie House, and Tree.

Copied from the view in Dr. Strong's History.

The interior of the present building has been remodelled three times since 1836. At that time the old straight, high-back pews on the main floor were replaced by more modern ones. The high fronts of the side galleries were lowered, and a gallery erected across the east end of the church. In 1852 the parsonage, on the lot adjoining the Academy, was sold for about \$5,000 to Mr. Rich. L. Schoonmaker. The old stone parsonage next the church was torn down, and a beautiful double house, which has been used since that time as a parsonage, was erected in its place at a cost of \$9,881.52. During this year the church was again renovated at a cost of \$4,514.25. The straight-back old fashioned pews in the side galleries were removed, and more comfortable ones put in their place, and the backs of all the pews in the church upholstered. A large organ was purchased at a cost of \$2,249.93, and placed in the east gallery. This organ was purchased

vacant, the church was thoroughly remodelled. All the pews on the main floor were replaced with more comfortable ones; the walls were frescoed, and the canvas painting back of the pulpit replaced with a fresco on the wall representing a recess. A marble tablet, in memory of Rev. Thomas M. Strong, D. D., was placed in the west wall by the side of the pulpit. Most of the seats belonging to New Lots were purchased by the consistory.

Heretofore, the pews had been owned by individuals, and the salary raised by a subscription list. It was now resolved to rent the pews owned by the church, and fix a ground-tax upon all pews owned by individuals. At this time, the subject of procuring a new clock for the steeple was agitated by H. L. BARTLETT, M. D., author of "*Sketches of Long Island*." The matter was finally taken in hand by the consistory, who removed the old clock which had been silent from age for

many years, and replaced it Sept. 20, 1862, with a new clock of Sperry & Co's make, costing \$375.

Sabbath-School of Reformed Church.—Through the influence of Rev. Dr. Strong and Adrian Vanderveer, M. D., a sabbath-school was organized the year after Dr. Strong began his labors. Dr. Vanderveer was the first superintendent, and held the office for nearly thirty years. Until 1830, the Sabbath-school was held in the school-rooms of the Academy. During this year, an effort was made by the "Ladies' Sewing Society" of the village, and \$1,195.82 were raised, and a suitable frame building 25x50 feet was erected, about twenty-five feet south of the church, with its gable end to the main road. This building was taken down during the summer of 1881. The other *superintendents* of the school have been Mr. Irwin Cortelyou and Mr. John D. Prince; the *Assistant-Superintendents* were Mrs. Ellen C. Strong, Mrs. Susan Schoonmaker, Mrs. Maria L. Lefferts, Mrs. Elizabeth C. Strong, Miss Mary Vanderveer. In 1871, the school had so increased that it was impossible to find accommodation in the old building, although it had been once enlarged. The Consistory, therefore, resolved to erect a new one; and a building committee, consisting of Rev. C. L. Wells, D. D., Mr. A. J. Ditmas and Mr. John D. Prince, was appointed.

Lots, on the corner of Union place or Grant street, were purchased from Hon. John A. Lott, at a cost of \$11,000. The old wheelwright and blacksmith shops, and the old Antonides house were removed. In their place a beautiful (Gothic) brown stone building was erected, at a cost of \$49,823.59, making the total amount expended \$60,823.59. The school now numbers 8 officers, 45 teachers, and 350 scholars.

St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church was organized July 11, 1836, with Matthew Clarkson and Robert J. Crommelin, *Wardens*; David Johnson, James Mowatt, George Cornell, C. Durand, Charles Waldron, A. Norrie, William H. Story and Samuel Richards, Jr., *Vestrymen*. Rev. Dr. Benjamin C. Cutler acted as Rector for the congregation; which, until the completion of their church, occupied the lecture-room of the Reformed Church. The corner-stone of a church edifice was laid August 13, 1836, by the Rt. Rev. Benjamin T. Onderdonk, and the church completed in December, at a cost of \$8,480, of which over \$6,000 was donated by Mr. Matthew Clarkson. December 23, 1836, Rev. Thomas T. Brittain became rector; and, on the 29th, the edifice was consecrated. Rev. John F. Messenger was assistant minister until September 1, 1837, when he was followed by Rev. James Coghlan. Mr. Brittain resigned March 29, 1836, and was succeeded by Mr. Coghlan as rector, who resigned October 21, 1839. He was followed by William Barlow, March 30, 1840, who resigned April 29, 1842. Rev. George Barker was then rector until February 12, 1844, followed by Rev. William H. Newman, who died in Flatsh, after ten years' service, and was buried in the

churchyard of the Reformed church. In 1854 Rev. William Rudder became rector; succeeded, in 1858, by Rev. Mr. Pennington; and he, September 30, 1861, by Rev. B. S. Huntington, who resigned July 12, 1863. The Rev. J. A. Spencer, D.D., became rector July 28, 1863, and resigned September 9, 1865. Then Rev. H. W. Fay was called Sept. 21, 1865, resigned December 29, 1866. Rev. Robert B. Van Kleeck, D.D., was called March 7, 1867; resigned July, 1874, and was succeeded by Rev. James W. Braden. He was called to Hartford, Ct., and in June, 1882, was succeeded by the present incumbent, Rev. Summerfield E. Snively. In July, 1874, the church edifice was sold to General Philip S. Crooke, and a new one erected, at a cost, with furniture, of \$7,000; C. C. Haight, *architect*; William Vause, *builder*. It was first occupied for service Thanksgiving-day, November, 1874, and consecrated May 31, 1877, by Rt. Rev. A. N. Littlejohn, Bishop of Long Island. The church stands near the site of the first church, on the corner of Church Lane and Irving Place. During Mr. Van Kleeck's rectorship, a commodious (Gothic) rectory was erected at a cost of \$11,000. Soon after the building of the church, Mr. Matthew Clarkson inaugurated a Sunday-school, of which he was the superintendent, until about 1850; after which the rector assumed the charge. During Mr. Van Kleeck's term, his son, Robert Van Kleeck, Jr., was superintendent, followed by Henry G. Marshal, Rev. Mr. Braden, and Robert S. Walker, the present superintendent. The infant school, for years a strong feature of the school, has been under the successive charge of Mrs. Robert Van Kleeck, Mrs. John H. Bergen, Miss A. Hopkins, Miss Fannie Miller. We have taken Rev. Dr. Strong as the authority for facts of the early history of this church; and are also indebted to the assistance of Rev. Mr. Braden and Mr. William Matthews.

St. John's Episcopal Church, Parkville.—(Sketch furnished by the pastor, Rev. R. B. Snowden.) The incorporation of this church dates September 28, 1859. In 1860 it was received into union with the Convention of the Diocese of New York, the Diocese of Long Island not having then been formed. The incorporators were William Matthews and George W. Close, *Wardens*, and Lawrence Powers, Henry Wiggins, B. S. Hilton, James Sutherland, John Marquis, William Staite, John V. N. Bergen and Walter Kelsey, *Vestrymen*. No further records of this early period are extant; until the year 1868, when the Diocese of Long Island was formed. The Rev. R. B. Van Kleeck, D.D., then rector of St. Paul's Church, Flatbush, took charge of the parish. Services were held either by himself, or his son, R. B. Van Kleeck, Jr., who being a candidate for Holy Orders, acted as Lay Reader. Services were held for several years at the village school-house. In February, 1871, the sum of \$1,000 was obtained, with which, in March 1873, was purchased a section of land

200 feet square, pleasantly located on Webster avenue, near the Ocean Parkway. In the work of soliciting funds Mrs. Mary Tunison was especially active and successful. In the summer of 1873 the use of the school-house being desired by the parish for public worship, Mr. Mortimer C. Tunison placed at their disposal a small building near the corner of Coney Island Road and Newkirk avenue; and, at his own expense, fitted it up for a chapel. Service was held in it for the first time September 6, 1873, the Rev. Mr. Cromwell officiating. The Rev. Dr. Van Kleeck was rector of the Church until after Easter, 1874; Mr. Ritchie officiating as Lay Reader. He was succeeded by Rev. William W. Ayres, who discharged the same duties until Christmas, 1874. In February, 1875, the Rev. R. H. Tighe was appointed by the Bishop to the charge of St. John's. His relation as minister in charge continued until Easter, 1876, although the Rev. R. B. Snowden, then awaiting orders, was appointed in October, 1875, to conduct the service, and he is still the rector. In the summer of 1875, Mr. M. C. Tunison made certain necessary alterations in the building, and enlarged it by the addition of a chancel. In 1882, this edifice, having been presented to the parish by the heirs of Mr. M. C. Tunison, was removed and placed on the church plot on Webster avenue. It is thirty-six feet in length by sixteen in width. A subscription is now in progress to obtain funds wherewith to remodel and enlarge the building. A Sabbath-school has been maintained since the organization of the parish, and has at present a membership of thirty-five pupils and teachers. For several years Mr. Charles Leigh was superintendent; he was succeeded by Mr. John Mower, who still holds the position. There are at present twenty-two families connected with the parish, and eighteen communicants. The corporation is now constituted as follows: Rev. Robert Bayard Snowden, M. A., *Rector*; C. W. H. Carter and Charles Leigh, *Wardens*; and C. A. Bemers, James Busby, Spencer A. Wallace, Little Rutherford, James Rutherford, Thomas Rowe, and Samuel Stretch, *Vestrymen*.

First M. E. Church of Flatbush was organized May 21, 1844. Previous to this time occasional services had been held in the village, by itinerant and local preachers of the denomination. Tradition states that frequently on summer Sabbath afternoons, services were held under the shade of the large linden, or bass-wood tree at the north-west corner of Church Lane and the main road, near the old Zabriskie house. Rev. Lorenzo Dow Stansbury, an exhorter from the M. E. Sands St. Church, of Brooklyn, often preached here. In May, 1844, a church organization was formed by the election of Amaziah Foster, Richard Halliby, Philip S. Croke, Wm. H. Story, Adrian Vanderveer, M. D., Rem, John and Rem R. Hegeman and Samuel Youngs as *Trustees*; with a connection of several families, and a membership of ten persons. The first sermon preached to the new

congregation, by a regular preacher, was in 1845, under a large willow on East Broadway; and, for three or four years thereafter, services were regularly held at Mr. Rem Hegeman's house. In the winter, protracted meetings during the week were also held at this house. These services, conducted principally by local preachers from Brooklyn and elsewhere, were often continued from five to six weeks at a time, and were largely instrumental in increasing the membership, and the numbers of the congregation. During the first season thirty-two converts were added to the church. In 1848 a lot, corner of East Broadway and Prospect street, was donated by Dr. Adrian Vanderveer, valued at \$800. In 1849, a frame building, 50x36 feet, facing on East Broadway, was erected by Rem R. Hegeman, as master-mechanic, at a cost of about \$1,200. For many years this congregation was supplied by Conference with preachers, who also included Flatlands and other neighboring places, in their ministrations.

Ministers.—Lorenzo Dow Stansbury, an exhorter from Brooklyn, is named by the best authorities (in the absence of early records) as having had charge of the congregation as early as 1842. He labored for several years, and was largely instrumental in building up the church in its infancy. After he left, Flatbush was associated with Gowanus, and Rev. H. D. Latham preached at both places. Then followed Rev. N. Orchard. Flatbush is first mentioned in the minutes of the Conference in 1845, when it was associated with Gravesend, and Rev. L. D. Nickerson was pastor. 1846 (Centen. M. E. Ch., Brooklyn and Fl.), John C. Green; 1847 (Fl. and 18th St. M. E. Ch., Brooklyn), E. S. Hebard. The first pastor of Flatland M. E. Church, after it became a separate charge, was Rev. G. W. Woodruff, 1848-'50; succeeded by Rev. T. H. Barch, 1850-'51. The next year the church was supplied by local preachers. In 1854 Flatbush and Flatlands churches were united as one charge under Rev. Jacob Shaw; 1856, Rev. S. W. Law; 1857-'58, Rev. Wm. Gothard; 1861, Rev. Geo. N. Pratt; 1862 (Fl. joined with Cook St. Ch., Brooklyn), Rev. Joseph Henson; 1863-4, Flatbush and Flatlands were united. During this period Mr. John Rowlee, of Fleet St. Ch., Brooklyn, became interested in this church and took charge of the congregation; 1865, Rev. F. S. Weedon; 1868-'70, Rev. J. C. Thomas. During his pastorate, and through his labors, a new church edifice was erected on Diamond street, near Flatbush avenue, the corner-stone of which was laid July 28, 1869. The building is of brick, with a chapel and Sabbath-school room on the ground floor and a large audience room for church service above. The size is 40x85 feet. The cost of the building was \$17,500. The land cost \$6,500. At first only the ground-floor, or Sunday-school room, was furnished. The first services were held in the new edifice July 6, 1870; the first sermon by Rev. Benjamin M. Adams July 10, 1870; and the church was dedicated October 30. The Sunday-

school was organized with three teachers, and now has eighteen; with twenty scholars, and now has seventy-five. *Superintendents:* Joshua Hamblin, George Matton, John B. Rowlee, Dr. John Robinson, John Kerswell, James A. Hamblin, R. S. Seckerson. The Rev. Mr. Thomas labored with great assiduity, contributing very largely of his own income to the church in whose history his pastorate forms a bright page. He was succeeded by Rev. Moses Bedell in 1870; Rev. W. E. Tompkins, 1871; Rev. James Robinson, 1872; Rev. C. Kelsey, 1873-'74; Rev. T. M. Terry, 1875-'78; Rev. T. D. Littlewood, 1878-'79. During the pastorates of these latter two, the church debt was cancelled. In 1880, Rev. John A. Roche, D. D., was appointed pastor, a man of great zeal, godliness and superior talent, whose labors were largely blest. He was succeeded, 1882, by Rev. C. W. Powell; the Flatbush and Sheepshead Bay churches being united in one charge.

"Church in the Woods."—In 1835 the colored Methodists established a church, since known by the above name, at the eastern terminus of East Broadway, at the crossing of the Flatland Neck road. In 1838 it was fully organized by Rev. Samuel Todd, Presiding Elder. Frank Cummings and Cato Oliver were made *trustees*, in connection (according to the statement of Mr. Samuel Anderson, Sen., one of the few surviving members of the old church) with seven trustees of the Fleet St. Church of Brooklyn. A frame church was built, with help from friends in Flatlands, Flatbush and Brooklyn, on land bought from Richard Johnson, next the woodland of Michael Stryker's estate. Money was raised by subscription in Flatlands and Flatbush, with some slight help from Brooklyn, and a frame edifice erected. The church was afterwards burned, and dissensions arose among the members, so that it was finally decided to organize anew as an Independent or Congregational Church. By the aid of Rev. Dr. Storrs, of Brooklyn, it was so organized as a Congregational Church, with Rev. Abram Brown (colored) as acting pastor; and a new edifice of brick, cost \$800, was erected. *Ministers:* Revs. George Leviere; Marbley; James Carter. The church is partly supported by the Home Missionary Society of the Congregational Church.

Flatbush Mission School.—Mrs. Gertrude L. Vanderbilt organized, in February, 1856, a colored Sunday-school, which for some three years assembled in a little room at the rear of Judge Vanderbilt's house. Through Mrs. Vanderbilt's exertions it resulted in an incorporated "*Society for the Amelioration of the Colored Population of Flatbush.*" A church was erected on the north side of the main road to Brooklyn (site now enclosed in south-east corner of the deer-paddock in Prospect Park); and, when the land was afterwards taken for the park, it was removed to lots upon the north-west terminus of Catharine street. When these lots were afterwards cut away by the extension of the Brighton Beach Railroad,—and Catharine street was ob-

literated by the opening of Malbone street, Washington and Tompkins avenues—the church organization was dissolved; not, however, without having accomplished much good among the colored population of the village.

M. E. Church, of Parkville, organized 1865.—John L. Strong, son of Rev. Dr. Strong, in 1853, soon after the founding of Greenfield, went over to the new village one Sunday afternoon to arrange for the establishment of a Sunday-school. With assistance from Adrian and his son John N. Bergen, and Wm. H. Taylor, they soon had a flourishing school, which met in the house of Mr. Tennis Bergen, and became the parent of all the evangelical churches in the village. In 1865, a few professing Christians, under the lead of Mr. Edward Ridley (Ridley & Sons, Grand street, New York), then of Gravesend, established religious services at the public school-house; afterwards, at residences of Mr. Sutherland, W. H. Taylor and J. Tibbets. Finally, during the year, an organization was effected; with Edw. Ridley, J. Tibbets, W. Whitely, W. H. Taylor, Geo. Wilson, as *trustees*. Lots were purchased, on the corner of Foster and Second streets, and a frame structure was erected, at a cost of \$4,500, which was dedicated April 1, 1866, by Bishop James. Before this, however, the church was supplied by Rev. L. W. Anderson; in April, 1866, the Rev. Nich. Orchard was appointed pastor; followed, in 1869, by Rev. Geo. A. Graves. During his pastorate the opening of the new Ocean Parkway or Boulevard necessitated the removal of the church, and it was so removed to Lawrence street, west of the Boulevard, between Second and Third streets. But, finally, through Mr. Ridley's efforts, a new edifice and parsonage were erected in 1872, at a cost of \$16,000. It has a fine steeple, is elegantly furnished, and was dedicated October, 1873, \$10,000 being subscribed toward the liquidation of the debt, at the second meeting of the congregation. Rev. W. P. Estes, pastor from 1872, was followed, 1875, by Rev. H. Asten; he, 1878, by Rev. John A. Roche, D. D.; he, 1880, by Rev. Geo. Taylor; and he, 1881, by Rev. W. C. Blake. After the disbanding of Mr. Strong's Sunday-school, consequent on the gradual development of several church organizations in the village, the Methodist Episcopal Church appointed Mr. Wm. White, of Brooklyn, as superintendent. He served one year, and was followed (by successive re-elections) by Mr. Edw. Ridley, to the present time. The Sunday-school building is remarkably elegant and well equipped for its special purpose; and the school is self-supporting, costing about \$600 per annum. Teachers assert that the opening of this Boulevard has exercised a very demoralizing effect, not only upon the attendance of the school, but upon the churches and other portions of the community.

Parkville Congregational Church was organized April 10, 1866, by the New York and Brooklyn Congre-

grational Association, by appointment of Joseph Sutherland, Daniel M. Cumisky, Standish Mason, William Staites, Richard Perrin, Charles A. Berners, Ezekiel Robin and John Wilson, as *Trustees*. The first officers were John Wilson, *Clerk*; Standish Mason, Ezekiel Robin and John Wilson, *Deacons*. A neat and commodious church was soon built, at a cost of \$10,000, and Rev. J. B. Hopwood became pastor in 1866; followed, 1868, by Rev. H. Belden, who served three years. In 1874, Rev. J. W. McEekron was called; but, in 1877, was followed by Rev. Thomas Douglas, who resigned after three years, and was succeeded by Rev. W. H. Shannon, the present pastor. Present *Officers*: J. V. N. Bergen, James Sutherland, William Spencer; Mr. Bergen, *Clerk*. The Sunday-school, organized 1866, has had, as Superintendents, J. V. N. Bergen, Thomas H. Stevens, W. H. Hudson, James Sutherland, Rev. W. H. Shannon.

Windsor Terrace Sabbath-School.—After establishing a flourishing Sunday-school at Parkville, Mr. J. L. Strong, in 1854, undertook a similar enterprise in the new village of Windsor Terrace; and, with Mr. George Hudson and others, organized a prayer-meeting, which proved a success. Upon Mr. Strong's leaving for Pennsylvania, in 1855, Mr. John D. Prince, Superintendent of the Sunday-school of the Flatbush Reformed Church, was induced to assume the charge of this work; and for nearly twenty-five years, "rain or shine," he rode across the country, every Thursday night, to fulfill his appointment at Windsor Terrace. He resigned in 1880, leaving in the village a religious element which ultimately bore fruit in a church organization. In connection with this prayer-meeting, a Sunday-school was organized August 16, 1871, of which Lewis P. Eager was *Superintendent*, E. B. Estes, *Secretary*, and Hoyt Palmer, *Treasurer*; the school meeting at a house on the north-west corner of Coney Island road and Vanderbilt street. The school is well equipped and has had, as Superintendents, J. S. K. Wittke, 1873; and, since 1875, by re-election, Mr. C. C. Martin, the well known Bridge Engineer. Although there exists at Windsor Terrace a legally appointed incorporation, there is, as yet, no organized church; but those in charge of the Sunday-school felt that upon them devolved the responsibility of providing means of religious worship to those who were coming into the place from the city. Several efforts were made, but unsuccessfully, till Mrs. C. C. Martin enlisted her husband's interest. By his efforts was secured a certificate of incorporation for an association under the title of "*The Windsor Terrace Sabbath-school*," the corporate members of which were C. C. Martin, E. B. Estes, J. S. A. Wittke, Samuel P. Seaman and John S. Wildridge; application made December 23, 1873, and granted by a Judge of the Supreme Court January 3, 1874. This association, with legal rights to purchase and transfer property, etc., secured a site on the west side of East

Fifth street, between Greenwood avenue and Vanderbilt street, on which was built a frame chapel for lecture and school purposes, which was dedicated February 15, 1874. This was accomplished largely by the efforts of Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Wittke. Regular Sabbath and week-day services have since been maintained, conducted by pastors of churches in the city and vicinity, especially Rev. Thomas H. Wray. The enterprise still depends on voluntary subscriptions, but has accomplished a good service to the village.

Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Cross.—(*Sketch contributed by Peter J. Curran, M. D., of Flatbush*). Prior to 1848-9, the few Catholic residents of Flatbush, and of Kings County generally, outside of the City of Brooklyn, had no place of worship, and were only occasionally accommodated by missions conducted by the clergy of the Jay Street Roman Catholic Church of that city. Under the pressure of a long-felt want for a more accessible place of worship, the old "Curran House," still standing in the Cemetery grounds, then recently purchased, was selected for the purpose, and a weekly mass and confessional established. The first priest in charge was Father Quinn, from St. James', Brooklyn. He resided in the upper part of the house, a portion of the lower being used as a chapel. From the latter part of 1848, to about the middle of 1850, Fathers Quinn, Briody and Gillespie, in the order named, served as pastors. Meanwhile the number of Catholics in Flatbush had increased; and, with the consent of Father McDonough, the Vicar-General of Long Island, they purchased eight lots on the corner of the present Erasmus and Prospect streets. On these, in the fall of 1851, they erected a neat and commodious frame church, about 75x50 feet in size. It had a low, slanting, shingle roof, and was surmounted by a plain Roman cross of wood. With but slight alterations, the building, like its predecessor in the cemetery, still exists and is now used as the parochial school-house. In this edifice, costing \$1,300 (no debt incurred), mass was first offered by Father Bacon, of Brooklyn, afterwards Roman Catholic Bishop of Portland, Maine. Father Gillespie, the resident pastor, removed to California in January, 1852; and the church was served by Father Eugene Cassidy and others until April, when Rev. Andrew Bohen was installed as its first regular pastor, removing the pastoral residence to Erasmus street, one door from Prospect. In the winter of 1852, a parochial school, the first in the county towns, was established in the gallery of the church, under charge of Mr. John Savage, and with about 125 scholars, of both sexes; there being, at this time, about 450 parishioners. A Sunday-school was also established; and, in 1853, a sacristy was added to the church. In 1854 a division was made of the Holy Cross parish; that portion of New Lots called East New York being made a separate parish and the Church of St. Malachi erected. For awhile, the Flatbush priests served these parishes

alternately ; and, in 1855, Father Bohen was succeeded in the pastorate by Rev. John Dowling. The teacher, Mr. Savage, also left Flatbush, and was succeeded by Timothy Hurley, a gentleman of the highest culture, who chose to hide his abilities in a village-school. His invariable snit of "pepper-and-salt" was known throughout the five towns of the county—a decent garb, as warm in winter as it was cool in summer. With close shaven face, sharp pinched features, a keen gray eye, a broad honest forehead, a large and powerfully chiselled mouth, with a chin of ponderous size, both bespeaking firmness—the whole a pale, kind countenance—he was ever and completely the school-master. He lived to see almost two generations schooled in his manly, but gentle ways ; and left behind him a name synonymous with education throughout the county towns. Mr. McDonald, Mrs. John Hoey, Charles McLaughlin (brother of Rev. James) have also been honored teachers of this school. Mr. Hurley also had a second term of service after these. The church gallery, which had hitherto served as a school, in 1855-6 became too straitened for the increase of scholars ; and a small frame structure (formerly a carpenter's shop) was presented to the parish by Patrick H. Curren for the purpose, and was moved from its original site to the present location of the Convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph. It is now used as a dwelling-house on Grand street, to which it was removed years ago. Father Dowling was killed by being thrown from his wagon, September 28, 1858, and is buried in the Holy Cross Cemetery. Father Bartholomew Gleason succeeded to the pastorate, and became the first occupant of the new parochial residence, purchased by the parish, corner Prospect street and Dutchman's Lane, now East Broadway. In September, 1860, Rev. Stephen Cassidy became pastor, but died in October, 1861, from ailments contracted in the discharge of his duties. Rev. Thomas McLaughlin followed ; under him the school-house was enlarged, the parochial property improved, and the whole parish felt the influence of his large-hearted character and personal magnetism. Ill health caused him to leave in 1864, and his place was taken by Father Strain, during whose time a new school-house was improvised out of an old coach-house, on the site of the old one. It was removed in 1872, when the Sisters of St. Joseph came to Flatbush. Father Strain took an especial interest in the school, and under his supervision it, as well as the religious societies of the parish, flourished. He died suddenly, and was followed by Rev. James Moran, and he by Rev. Michael Moran. In 1869, Rev. James J. Doherty became pastor, and gave a new impetus to the surroundings of Holy Cross. Through his efforts the new church, the largest and richest in the county towns, was erected ; the Sisters of St. Joseph were introduced ; the old church was converted into a school-house ; a curate was provided ; the parish was divided into two districts and a new church organized in the village of

Parkville, and placed under the care of the learned Father James McKiverken. September 1, 1872, the corner-stone of the new church was laid, and the completed edifice was dedicated June 8, 1873. It is 65x127 feet, of Croton-brick, with Dorchester-stone trimmings, and in the nineteenth century French-Gothic style, with a tower and spire in the northeast corner, 150 feet high. Its interior decorations are in polychrome, and it accommodates a congregation of 1,000, and cost about \$40,000. Thomas P. Houghton, of New York city, was the *architect* ; and Thomas Ryan, the *builder*. Father Doherty, much broken in health, closed his pastorate of nearly ten years, May 22, 1881, and was followed by Rev. Bernard McHugh ; Father Marron being curate. Under their care all the various Roman Catholic interests of Flatbush are prospering.

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The Sisters of St. Joseph, who now have charge of the Roman Catholic parochial schools, for both sexes, came into the parish November, 1872, from the Mother House, at Flushing, which is also the Convent of St. Joseph. The first sisters here were Sister Alphonsus, *Superioress* ; Sister Aurelia, Sister Loyla and Sister Gertrude. The present community comprises the *Superioress*, and teachers, as follows : Sister Sylvester, Sister St. Heri, Sister Sidonia and Sister St. Ignatius. Miss R. Moan is the church organist and also instructor in the school. The services of the Catholic clergy of Flatbush, not only in their parish, but in their faithful ministrations at the County Asylum, Hospital, Nunnery and Almshouse, not to mention the Small Pox Hospital, located in this town, entitle them to most unstinted praise.

Roman Catholic Church at Parkville.—Before the erection of the Roman Catholic church at Flatbush, the catholic residents of the country towns were entirely dependent upon the city of Brooklyn for their religious privileges ; though, on certain occasions, services were held at the convent, at New Utrecht. After the Flatbush Roman Catholic church was erected, the catholics of Parkville, New Utrecht and Gravesend were all included within its jurisdiction. In the latter part of 1869, Rev. Mr. Moran, resident priest at Flatbush, initiated an organization at Parkville, which was completed in 1870, for a congregation and the erection of a church edifice for those of his faith. A neat frame edifice, in the Gothic style, was erected on Lawrence avenue, near First street, at a cost of \$12,000, the corner-stone of which was laid August 21, 1870, and the building finished November 27, 1870. It was dedicated by Rt. Rev. Roman Catholic Bishop of Brooklyn, and received the name of "*Church of St. Rose of Lima*." The church is prosperous and well attended. During its first three years the church was supplied by the Flatbush church : Rev. James McKiverken, appointed October, 1874, the first and present pastor of this and Sheepshead Bay flock, has, since July, 1879, been assisted by Rev. William Doherty. There is a

flourishing Sunday-school in connection with this church.

Cemetery of the Holy Cross.—Several efforts, previous to 1849, to purchase property for a Roman Catholic cemetery, failed, owing to the unwillingness of the towns-people to have a cemetery of *any* character within the limits of the town. But, during the spring of that year, a tract of land in the eastern section of the town was secured, and the *Cemetery of the Holy Cross* founded. The farm, of which this land formed a part, originally belonged to Joost Van Brunt. In 1772 he sold it to Hendrick Suydam, who, at his death, left it to his son, Cornelius. In 1837 certain speculators conceived the idea of laying out a village in this section of the town. Through John A. Scudder, as their representative, a section of this farm, containing 18 acres, was purchased in 1837 from Mr. C. Suydam, at \$300 per acre, and divided into small village lots. A number of these lots were sold. Dr. Adrian Vanderveer purchased at this time another section of this farm, containing 12 acres, lying to the north of the first purchase. During the panic, in 1837, Scudder failed to meet his payments, and was obliged to relinquish his section. John Gill, who had purchased a small lot and built a house on it, now bought the portion sold by Scudder. Many unsuccessful attempts were made to procure this property from these parties for a cemetery. At length James Duffey, a coffee and spice merchant in Brooklyn, made a proposal to buy the land and erect there a large mansion, as well as to build and operate spice-mills. This gave color to the idea that the mechanics engaged in the mill would buy lots and build here. Gill finally consented to sell for \$2,700. After the property came into Duffey's control, he changed his mind in reference to the spice-mills; and accepted a tempting offer from Rev. James McDonough, pastor of what was then St. James Church, Brooklyn, but afterward became the Brooklyn Cathedral.

This first purchase for the cemetery, of 17 acres, 3 rods, was made in June, 1849, by Rev. J. McDonough acting for Right Rev. John Hughes, who was then Bishop of New York and Brooklyn. Dr. Vanderveer would not sell his section. On July 14, 1849, Thomas Moran, who was the first victim of the cholera in the town, died, and was the first person interred in the cemetery. The second purchase was made from Mr. Samuel Young, whose house, in the rear of the cemetery, had been accidentally destroyed by fire. Not desiring to rebuild in this locality, he sold his land, consisting of one acre, to the cemetery, for \$500. The third purchase was in 1857, from the heirs of the estate of Adrian Vanderveer, M. D., who sold 19 acres 3 rods, at \$500 per acre. This portion was not used for twelve years, until November 3, 1869, when the first interment was made. During 1869 another section, consisting of 22 acres, was bought from Leffert Cornell. This was formerly the Cornelius Vanderveer

farm. For this section about \$18,000 was paid by the cemetery.

The title of the property is vested in the Bishop of the Brooklyn diocese. In the spring of 1855, a neat chapel was erected in the cemetery, and dedicated by Right Rev. John Loughlin, Bishop of Brooklyn.

The first superintendent of the cemetery was James Egan, who held the position until April 1, 1853; when P. H. Curren was appointed, who through faithful discharge of his duties held the position for twenty-six years. On his resignation, in 1879, the bishop appointed, on March 1, 1879, his son Wm. H. Curren, as superintendent, through whose assistance many of these facts have been gathered.

There have been, since the founding of the cemetery, 152,322 interments. The greatest number in one year has been 6,000. This was during the last visitation of the cholera. The average would be about 5,000. During the cholera, 278 were buried in one week. The diocesan vaults for the burial of the Catholic clergy are under the chapel. There are twelve large vaults in different parts of the cemetery. Although owned by the Brooklyn diocese, the right to bury is not restricted to it. The yearly average of funerals from New York City is about seven hundred. The services at the cemetery are under the supervision of the parish priest at Flatbush village.

First Baptist Church of Flatbush, organized April 29, 1872, with Joseph Steele, H. J. Eggleston, John D. Randolph, R. H. Estes, E. C. Dickinson, as *trustees*, and 19 members and their families. They first worshipped in a class-room of the Methodist church; afterwards, for nearly three years, in second story of Schoonmaker's Hall, on Flatbush avenue—the pulpit for the first year being supplied by Rev. J. B. Cleaver. In 1873, Rev. L. F. Moore was called as first pastor; followed, after two years, by Rev. F. T. Cailhopper, who resigned 1877, and was followed, December 1, 1881, by Rev. Renel C. Bowen, then a theological student, but now the installed pastor. During Mr. Moore's pastorate, a chapel was erected on west side Ocean avenue, south of Church Lane; it was dedicated September 27, 1874. This edifice was remodelled and enlarged, and otherwise improved, in 1880. A Sunday-school was organized at same time as the church, of which the Superintendents have been H. J. Eggleston, R. H. Estes, L. I. Boone, and William B. Green, the present incumbent. The present church officers are H. J. Eggleston and R. H. Estes, *deacons*; Mrs. Nancy Randolph, *deaconess*; Albert Zisett, *treasurer*.

Second Reformed (German) Church of Flatbush.—Fifteen years ago the German population of Flatbush depended for religious privileges upon the German church at New Brooklyn (now corner Herkimer street and Hazard avenue), three miles distant. In 1874 an effort was made by F. C. Suckow, pastor of the New Brooklyn German church to form a congrega-

tion in Flatbush, and a preaching service was commenced March 1st in the Methodist chapel. On 18th of same month the church was organized by a committee of the South Classis of Long Island, with 55 members; the first consistory being John J. Snyder, John Ziegler, *elders*, Gustave Enck, Fred. Osman, *deacons*. The pulpit was, for some time, supplied by Rev. F. C. Suckow and Rev. Julius Hones. On July 11, 1875, the corner-stone was laid of a neat two-story frame and brick edifice, erected on the Reformed church property, corner East Broadway and Bedford avenue, at a cost of \$5,500. The first settled pastor was Rev. F. A. Freidel, called December 25, 1875; resigned in the Spring of 1881. The next was Rev. C. H. Schwarzback, the present pastor, called during the Summer of 1881. A prosperous Sunday-school has always been connected with this church.

Educational.—The early Dutch settlers of Kings county brought with them from the Fatherland a due appreciation of the importance of religious and educational privileges. The schoolmaster was regarded as occupying a social position second only to that of the "dominie;" indeed, under certain circumstances, he was required to perform some duties pertaining to the ministerial office. As we learn from BRODHEAD'S *History of New York*, Evert Pietersen was examined by the Classis of Amsterdam, in Holland, and sent out with a colony of emigrants as *schoolmaster* and *ziekentruster*, or "consoler of the sick," that he might "read God's word and lead in the singing until a minister should arrive." One of the stipulations made with Johannes Van Eekkelen, the schoolmaster of Flatbush, by the consistory of the church, in 1682, was that, "when the minister shall preach at Breuckelen or New Utrecht, he shall be required to read twice before the congregation (at Flatbush) from a book used for the purpose. In the afternoon he shall read a sermon, or explanation of the catechism, according to the practice approved by the minister." These men were always required to be church-members, and of good repute. Governor Stuyvesant, in 1649, earnestly besought the Amsterdam Classis, by letter, "to send out pious, well qualified, diligent schoolmasters," adding that nothing "is of greater importance than the right, earnest instruction of the youth." Dr. STRONG, who wrote his *History of Flatbush* forty years before the late TEUNIS G. BERGEN issued his "*Early Settlers of Kings County*," had earlier access than the latter to traditions which antedate existing records. This fact may serve to reconcile the differences which seem to exist between these two authorities in regard to the first schoolmasters. In accordance with Dr. STRONG'S statement, Adriaen Hegeman, clerk and schout, was the first schoolmaster, 1659-1671; while, according to BERGEN, Reynier Bastiaensen Van Giesen was the first. It will be seen that it is quite possible that Hegeman acted in this capacity, from 1653 or '54,

the date of his first coming to Flatbush, until 1660, in 5th June, of which year (according to Bergen's translation of the first records) the consistory made an agreement with Van Giesen to become schoolmaster. He served until October 26, 1663, when Pilgrom Cloeq was engaged, and probably served until 1671. This covers the period for which Dr. Strong could find no other schoolmaster than Hegeman, and places the date of the employment of a schoolmaster at a much earlier point. It is also in accordance with Dutch custom; for it cannot be supposed that the first settlers were here for nearly fifteen years without a schoolmaster and *krank-besoecker*. From 1671, Dr. Strong and Mr. Bergen agree as to their lists of schoolmasters.

The school-master was also employed as fore-singer and sexton; and, to increase his income, he had charge of all interments, for which he received a certain fee. He was required to ring the church bell before each session of the school. This practice was kept up until about 1794, a period of nearly one hundred and fifty years. He was to "instruct the children, also, on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons in the common prayers and the catechism." He was "required to keep school nine months in succession, from September to June. It was his duty to provide the basin and water for the administration of baptism, and to make arrangements for administration of the sacrament." He was also required to "give invitations for funerals, dig the grave and toll the bell." "For a speller he received three guilders, and four guilders for a writer" (probably instruction in spelling and writing). In addition he had a stated salary of "six hundred guilders in grain, and a dwelling-house, pasture and meadows." These requirements continued in force for nearly one hundred years. In Dr. STRONG'S history we find an agreement with one of the earliest teachers and also one with the last teacher, in the Dutch language, in 1773, in which there is very little, if any, change in the requirements. The first school-house was situated upon a lot of land opposite the old lecture-room of the church and next to the land now owned by the Academy. In 1823 the church used the south portion of the lot, to build on it a parsonage. The first school-house was a wooden structure, composed of three buildings joined together. It stood until 1803, when, becoming much dilapidated, it was resolved to sell it, and move the village school into the academy. The building was sold to Bateman Lloyd, who took it down and constructed with the timber a store near the northwest corner of the main road and Church Lane, which remained until 1825. There were twenty-one school-masters employed from 1654 to 1802. Patrick Noon was the last teacher in the old school. The village school was taught as a distinct school, however, in the south end of the Academy. Mr. Hegeman was its first teacher in the Academy. Only the most elementary English branches were taught. Hegeman left in 1823. The Dutch language was taught

until about 1765, when Petrus Van Steenburgh was teacher. He was the first to teach English in connection with the Dutch. Anthony Welp was the last teacher of the Dutch language. Gabriel Ellison, in 1776, was the first to teach English exclusively in the village school.

Erasmus Hall Academy.—To the Rev. Dr. John H. Livingston and Senator John Vanderbilt is due the credit of founding an Academy in this village. With the active co-operation of the prominent citizens, in 1786, they entered upon the undertaking with commendable zeal. The sum of £915 was raised by subscription, the list being headed by Senator Vanderbilt with £100; and, during 1786, a large and commodious building 100 feet front and 36 feet deep was erected. An arrangement was made whereby a valuable lot in the center of the town was secured. This most desirable piece of property was held by Mr. Jacob Lefferts. The church, always closely associated with the education of the young, offered to Mr. Lefferts two other tracts of land, one lying directly west of the graveyard and facing on Church Lane; the other situated on East Broadway, near what is now the corner of Nostrand avenue, upon which property the "Lloyd Mill" was afterward erected. The consistory then, on December 29, 1797, executed a lease for this land in perpetuity to the Trustees. The property, in case the Academy ceases to exist, is to revert to the church. The amount raised by subscription did not meet the expense incurred in completing the building, the total cost of which was \$6,250. To liquidate this debt the inhabitants who held a deed for "Twillers" and "Corlears" Flats, relinquished their right and title to the Trustees of the Academy, who sold the property at the rate of \$16 per acre. From this sale the Academy realized \$1,500. The balance of the proceeds was divided among those inhabitants who would not relinquish their interest in the Flats. On the 18th of May, 1787, an application was made to the Regents of the University of the State of New York for a charter of incorporation, which was granted November 20, 1787; the incorporators named being John Vanderbilt, Walter Minto, Peter Lefferts, Johannes E. Lott, Aquila Giles, Cornelius Vanderveer, George Martense, Jacob Lefferts, Wm. B. Gifford, Hendrick Suydam, John J. Vanderbilt, Rev. Martinus Schoonmaker, Philip Nagel, Peter Cornell, Rev. John H. Livingston, D. D., James Wilson, Samuel Provost, John Mason and Comfort Sands. The name chosen for the new school was in honor of Desiderius Erasmus, the distinguished patron of literature in Holland in the sixteenth century. The academy, from its commencement, was bitterly opposed by many of the old inhabitants of the town, who afterward superstitiously attributed all their misfortunes to the establishment of an academy among them. The best teachers were employed, and a system of instruction adopted which made the institution the first of its kind in the

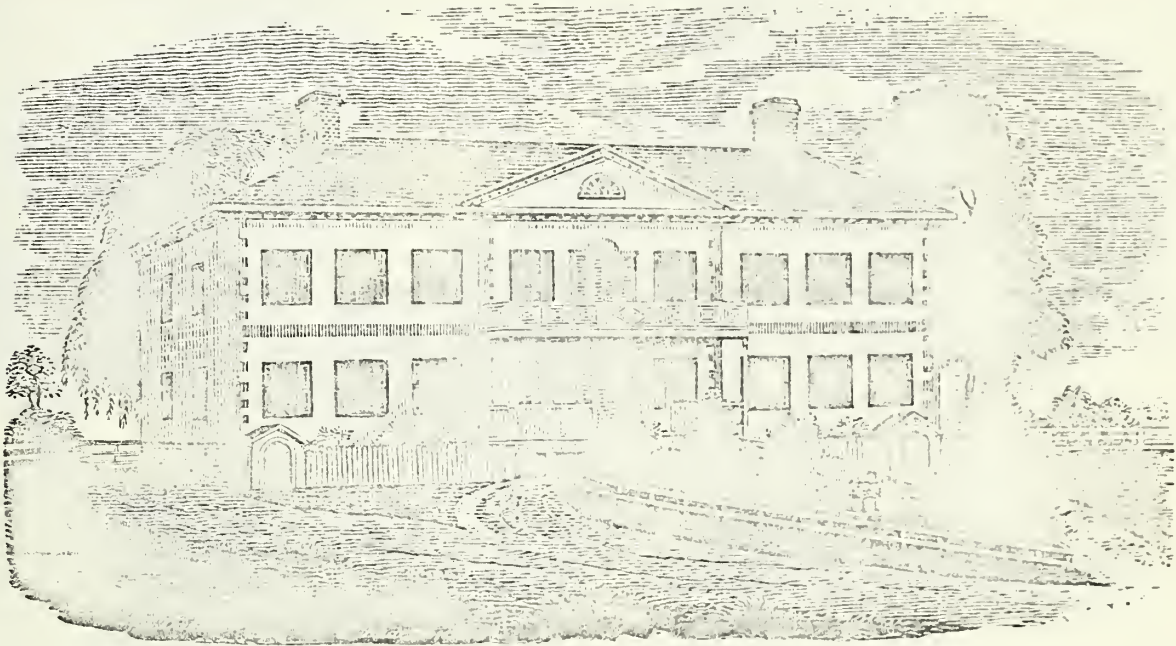
State. The whole of the income being thus expended by the Trustees in raising the standard of the institution, nothing could be appropriated toward canceling the outstanding debt. By voluntary contributions the Trustees reduced the amount, in 1789, to \$1,064.94; but it was not until 1825 that the debt was entirely removed. This was accomplished by a further sale of the Commons, or Flats, belonging to the town, and by voluntary subscriptions.

In 1794 the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church resolved to locate their Theological Seminary at Flatbush, in connection with the Academy, and make Rev. Dr. John H. Livingston, who had been chosen the first Principal of Erasmus Hall, President also of the Theological Seminary. A few years afterward, through certain influences brought to bear upon them, the General Synod removed the Seminary to New Brunswick, N. J. Among a large number of prominent men who were educated at Flatbush, we find the following names: William A. Duer, President of Columbia College, N. Y.; John Duer, one of the revisers of the Revised Statutes of this State; John Berrian, Attorney General of the U. S.; George M. Troup, for several years Governor of Georgia; Dr. Adrian Vanderveer, one of the most prominent physicians of the county; John Hunter, of the State Senate; Hon. John Vanderbilt, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, also State Senator, and Hon. John A. Lott, Judge of the Court of Appeals.

Rev. Dr. Livingston resigned in 1792, and Dr. Wilson was chosen in his place. He held the position of Principal, though employed also as Classical Professor at Columbia College, until 1804. This he was enabled to do by employing experienced men as his teachers. Rev. Peter Lowe was appointed to succeed Dr. Wilson as Principal, and remained until his death in 1819. Dr. Strong states that, in 1797, and again in 1809, the trustees sought, but did not obtain, from the legislature, the privilege of raising £1,200 by lottery, in order to liquidate the debt. The plan adopted by the trustees in former days was to employ some prominent man as principal, and then engage experienced teachers who should serve under him. The principal exerted merely a governing power, and participated only to a very limited degree in the work of teaching. In later years the principal has acted also as the first teacher, and employs experienced assistants. Mr. Albert Oblenis was employed while Rev. Mr. Lowe was principal, as first teacher. Next we find the name of Jobb Cooper, in 1806, the author of *Cooper's Virgil*, so well known as a text book in the schools and colleges, for so many years. He remained for two years and was succeeded by Mr. Valentine Derry, upon whose resignation, in 1809, Mr. Richard Whyte Thompson was appointed first teacher. He resigned in 1814, and was followed by William Thayre, appointed in December, 1814. He remained, however, only a part of a year, when the

trustees called Mr. William Ironsides. In 1816 Mr. Joab Cooper was again appointed, but resigned at the end of the year. The position was held for the next two years by Mr. Andrew Craig. Upon the death of the Principal, Rev. Peter Lowe, and the resignation of Mr. Craig, due to failing health, the Trustees appointed in August, 1818, the Rev. Joseph Penney, as Principal. He was the first Principal who resided at the Hall and had charge of the classes. He employed as assistant Rev. John Mulligan. They held the position until 1821, when Rev. Timothy Clowes, D.D., accepted the office. In 1823, Mr. Jonathan Kellogg became Principal. Under his administration the Academy flourished greatly; he made many changes in methods of teaching, and in the arrangements about the school-rooms. The trustees in 1826-'27 built a large wing, 50 by 25 feet, for additional school-rooms, on the N. E. corner of the

Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, and President of Rutgers College. During the time Dr. Campbell was principal, the Regents, in 1835, determined to establish a department for the instruction of common-school teachers in each of the eight senatorial districts. Erasmus Hall was chosen for the Southern District. High price of board, and other agencies, hindered the success of the plan in relation to Erasmus Hall, and only two applications were received. Consequently, in 1836, the trustees resigned the trust, and the Salem Academy, in Washington County, was chosen by the Regents. In May, 1839, Rev. Dr. Penney, who, since his resignation in 1821, had held the position of President of Hamilton College, returned to Flatbush and succeeded Dr. Campbell as Principal, which position he held until November 1, 1841, when Mr. James Ferguson, A. M., was chosen. In June 1843 he re-



ERASMUS HALL ACADEMY, 1850.

building, at a cost of \$1,500. Mr. Kellogg, also, made great improvements upon the exterior of the Academy, and in the appearance of the grounds. Nearly all of the beautiful trees which now adorn the grounds were planted by him. Matters did not, however, proceed satisfactorily after a few years; and, because of intemperance, he was called upon, in 1834, to resign the position. In May, 1834, the trustees appointed Rev. Wm. H. Campbell, who had for some time taught a select school in the village, as principal. "Through his superior qualifications as teacher he not only gave the highest satisfaction, but also infused in the hearts of the inhabitants an earnest desire for a liberal education to a degree which had never before existed." Dr. Campbell remained until 1839, when ill-health forced him to resign; and he has since occupied the position of Principal of the Albany Academy, Professor in the

signed the position, and the trustees appointed Rev. Richard D. Van Kleeck as Principal. Mr. Van Kleeck was a most thorough and efficient teacher, and under his care the institution was greatly prospered. A large number of scholars came from other States; and, for many years, a number of Mexican and Cuban students boarded at the Academy. Mr. Van Kleeck's health having failed, he resigned on February 22, 1860, and was succeeded by Rev. William W. Howard. On April 19, 1863, Mr. Howard, having received a call to the Presbyterian Church, at Ansonia, Cayuga County, N. Y., resigned as Principal. The trustees then chose the Rev. E. F. Mack as Principal. Mr. Mack held the position for eleven years; and, in September, 1874, was succeeded by Mr. Jared Hasbrouck. Upon the resignation of Mr. Hasbrouck, the trustees appointed, as principal, in February, 1879, Rev. Robert G. Strong, a former

graduate of the Academy, who for several years had conducted a large and prosperous select school in the village. Mr. Strong accepted the position, and in September, 1879, moved his school into the Academy. There is attached to the Academy a large library, which at one time contained 2750 volumes. Also a philosophical and chemical apparatus and mineralogical cabinet.

Select Schools.—Since the founding of Erasmus Hall, several private select schools have existed in the village. Among these, we mention the classical school of Mr. John Copp. This was the first select school, and was of a very high order. It was established in 1773-'74, and was held in an old house on the corner of Linden Boulevard and Flatbush Road. It was

school was taught by Miss Gerrard for several years. In 1840 Mrs. Mitchell opened a private school at her house in Clarkson street. This school was discontinued about 1876. After his resignation as Principal of the Academy, Rev. L. T. Mack, in 1874, opened a select school on Waverly avenue, for one year. In 1871 a select school was begun by Rev. R. G. Strong, the consistory of the church granting him the use of the old lecture-room adjoining the church. This school was merged into the Academy when Mr. Strong was appointed Principal of that institution, in 1879.

Public School No. 1.—For a number of years the village school was held at the Academy; and matters worked harmoniously until the year 1841, when dissatisfaction arose among certain residents of the



ERASMUS HALL ACADEMY, 1883.

broken up by the Revolutionary war, and Mr. Copp joined the army. The next select school was taught by Rev. William H. Campbell, D.D., in 1833, and was discontinued after the appointment of Dr. Campbell as Principal of the Academy.

A very flourishing and widely-known school was conducted by Miss E. N. Duryea. This school was begun in October 12, 1837, and was largely patronized by parties from a distance, as well as by parents residing in the vicinity of the village. A number of prominent persons were educated here, among whom we mention the name of Miss Emma Thursby, the world-renowned prima-donna. Miss Duryea closed her school because of her failing health. A well-conducted select

village in regard to the distribution of the school funds between the public school and the Academy. In order to avoid further trouble in the matter, the trustees of the Academy, in 1844, on motion of Hon. Gerrit Martense and John J. Vanderbilt, resolved, "That the children of the village school be removed from the Academy, and that the town be requested to build a special school-house for their accommodation."

Accordingly the children were taken from Erasmus Hall and taught for a time in a building on the corner of East Broadway and Flatbush avenue, owned by estate of Mr. Stryker. The next year a commodious two-story frame building, about forty-five by thirty feet, was erected for a school-house, near the site of the

present building. The main floor was fitted up for a school-room, and the upper story was reserved as a court-room. The primary town meetings and regular elections were held here for many years, until the erection of Schoonmaker Hall, in 1861. The members of the first Board of Trustees were General Philip S. Crooke, Captain W. Story, and Tennis J. Bergen. The first principal of the public school, after it was withdrawn from the academy, was Mr. John Oakley, who remained until 1852. He was succeeded by Mr. Dewitt C. Wickham, who held the position until 1857, when, because of failing health, he was compelled to resign. The next principal was Mr. David Van Etten. At the end of the school year he resigned, and, in 1858, the place was filled by the appointment of Mr. Horace Wickham. After two years his health failed, and he resigned. Mr. E. W. Bartlett held the position until 1861. He was followed by Mr. John T. Rhodes, who taught until 1865, when he entered the New York Theological Seminary. On the retirement of Mr. Rhodes, the trustees appointed Mr. John L. Williamson. In 1869 Mr. Williamson resigned, and Mr. Charles A. Libby became principal. He was succeeded in September, 1877, by Mr. A. Whigam, the present efficient incumbent, under whose influence the school has grown rapidly. The interests of the public school are under the care of three trustees, elected by the town. The members of the present Board are Dr. John L. Zabriskie, J. D. Randolph, and J. Lott Vanderbilt. In 1878 the accommodations became entirely too limited. For several years both stories of the old building had been used for school-rooms, and three teachers employed. At a town-meeting, in the early part of 1878, it was resolved to sell the old building, and appropriate \$19,000 of town funds, to be raised by taxation, for the building of a new school-house. John L. Zabriskie, M.D., J. D. Randolph and George Hamblin were appointed a committee to undertake the work. The plans were by Mr. John Y. Culyer, the engineer of Prospect Park; and the building (53 feet by 85 feet in size) of brick, two stories high. The building was begun May 1, 1878, and completed December 1, 1878. It was used for school purposes before it was finished, on October 14th, 1878. There is a large, well-selected library of some 1,500 volumes; and, at present, four teachers, besides the principal, are employed in the main school. In 1872 a branch school was established at the mission church for the colored children. Miss Mary E. Paton had charge of this, as principal, for four years; followed, in 1876, by Miss E. Morris; by Mrs. Ida Roberts, in 1878-'80; Miss Emma W. Clark, in 1880-'81; and Miss Bridget Walker, in 1881.

Parkville Public School.—At first, the inhabitants on the west side of the town sent their children to the Flatbush public school. In 1855, however, the settlers at Parkville, or Greenfield, as it was then

called, petitioned to be set off as a separate district. This was granted June 6, 1855, and Greenfield District School No. 1 was organized. It is now called *Flatbush No. 2*. Lawrence Powers, Joseph B. King and John Hall were the first trustees. The school was held for one year in a private house owned by Mr. Rutherford, and situated on section 64, on Webster avenue, near Second street. In 1856, a suitable building was erected for a school house.

Upon the opening of the Boulevard through the school property in 1872, this building was moved to its present site, on Lawrence avenue, near Second street; and in 1876 was greatly enlarged and remodelled. Owing to an omission in the records, we have been unable to obtain the full names of the different principals. The list, as far as can be ascertained, is as follows: The first principal was Miss Harriet Clark, 1856; followed by Miss Harriet Brewster; Risley or Ryler and Rodman in 1858. The position was afterward filled by male teachers. During a part of 1858 Mr. Kirkwood was principal. Mr. Mead, a portion of 1859, when the District was organized as a Union Free School. Mr. Mead was followed by Mr. Cady; Mr. Thompkins, two years; Mr. Berry, one year; Mr. North, two years, 1865-67. Mr. A. Whigam was appointed in 1868, at a salary of \$900, which was raised after one year to \$1,100. In 1873, the position was held by Mr. Devore; succeeded by Mr. Belden, in 1874; Mr. A. Whigam again, from 1875, until called, in September, 1877, to take charge of District No. 1, at Flatbush village. Mr. Christie next served one year, resigned; and Mr. Wallace was principal for three years. Upon his resignation, in 1881, the present principal, Mr. L. H. White, was appointed. The amount paid annually for the support of the school has increased in the twenty-seven years from \$75 to \$2,400. The board of trustees at present consists of Mr. J. H. Wilder, H. T. Montgomery, M. Ryan, P. H. Walsh and Wm. Staite. There are at present 153 scholars, taught by four teachers.

Windsor Terrace School.—At a meeting in the winter of 1873, called by Mr. Michael E. Finnegan, to consider public-school matters, it was resolved to petition the commissioner of public schools, and the trustees, to be set off as a separate school district, to be known as *District No. 3*, of the town school. The petition was granted, and a committee, consisting of Mr. E. Finnegan, C. C. Martin, Theodore Magnus and James Hardie, was appointed to carry out the wish of the meeting. C. C. Martin, Wm. E. Murphy, and M. E. Finnegan and ———, as trustees, secured the passage of an act authorizing them to bond the district for \$10,000, payable at the rate of \$1,000 annually, the first bond to be payable in 1880. A suitable school-house, in the Swiss style, costing \$6,700, from plans by John Y. Culyer, architect, was erected on the west side of Prospect avenue, between Greenwood avenue and Vanderbilt street, and was ready for use

January 1, 1876. In 1874, Mr. Wm. N. Walker was employed as the first principal; remained until April, 1876, and was followed by Mrs. Carrie Blamey. She was succeeded in September, 1876, by the present principal, Mr. John J. Wells, who by his efficient management has done much to build up the school. The school now numbers 100 scholars, and two teachers, beside the principal.

Literary Societies.—A number of literary and debating societies, of both a public and private character, have flourished in the village from time to time. The most prominent of these, the *Flatbush Literary Association*, was organized in 1840. During the winter of 1841-'42, a series of lectures on various subjects was given by some of its members. Rev. Dr. T. M. Strong's *History of Flatbush* was first prepared by him, as a member of this society, to be delivered as a lecture. After its delivery, there was an earnest demand for its publication. Only a few copies are now in existence, and for these extravagant prices have been offered. We are largely indebted to Dr. Strong's history for facts relating to the early history of the town.

Musical Associations.—The village has been long noted for its musical talents. Several well conducted and creditable musical associations for vocal and instrumental music have existed in the village. Promi-

nent among these are the *Flatbush Glee Clubs*, of 1853-1857, and the present *Flatbush Choral Society*, organized in 1877. The musical talent displayed has been quite remarkable for so small a town.

Conclusion.—We have thus traced, as minutely as the limited space allowed would admit, the civil, ecclesiastical and literary history of the town of Flatbush, from its earliest settlement to the present time, a period of nearly two hundred and fifty years. During all this time, unbounded prosperity from an over-ruling, all-wise providence of God has been granted to the village. Financial disaster or failure has seldom, if ever, visited it. The health of the town, with only two exceptions, during visitation of cholera, has been *unprecedentedly excellent*. Probably no other village containing so large a number of inhabitants, for so long a period a county-seat, and lately, for many years, under the shadow of one of the largest cities of the Union, can show such an unblemished record for good character, as a law-abiding, prosperous, religious and healthful community. May they ever treasure this record with grateful hearts; and may He, whose merciful providence has granted such prosperity to the village, still watch over those whom He has thus honored with such a lineage of good and upright men.

Facsimile of autograph of Cornelis Barend Van Wyck.

Emigrated from Wyck, a village of Brabant, Holland, in 1690; married Anna, daughter of Rev. Theodorus Polhemus, the first minister of the Dutch towns; and settled in Flatbush.

HON. JOHN VANDERBILT.

The Hon. JOHN VANDERBILT (referred to on pages 352 and 362, *History of Kings County*, as a partner in the legal firm of Lott, Murphy & Vanderbilt), was the eldest son of John Vanderbilt and Sarah Lott, his wife, of Flatbush. In 1835, as we have seen, he became the junior member of the distinguished and very representative firm above referred to. It is said of the three gentlemen comprising this firm, that "they brought into local politics the principles of statesmanship, and to civil service the habits of fidelity, independence and diligence, and that grade of culture, force and knowledge, which made their public records a bright part of the history of their county, just as their private careers have been a most honorable part of the social and intellectual history of their city."

On the 1st of May, 1844, Mr. Vanderbilt, then only twenty-five years of age, was appointed by Governor William C. Bouck, to the responsible position of first Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Kings county, to succeed Judge Greenwood, who had resigned. He discharged the duties of this important position with faithfulness and credit for two years, until the Court of Common Pleas was abolished by the adoption of the New Constitution in 1846, and the creation of the County Court as at present constituted. It has been said that, at the time of his retirement from the bench, there was not a more popular man, politically and socially, in the city of Brooklyn, than he. In the fall of 1852, he received the Democratic nomination for the State Senate, to which position he was chosen by a large majority. He filled this station creditably for the full term of two years. During his term as Senator he was appointed one of the Commissioners to investigate the harbor encroachments of New York. He was also selected as one of the Commissioners to investigate the affairs of President Nott and Union College. In the fall of 1856 he

was nominated on the Democratic ticket for Lieut.-Governor, with Amasa J. Parker, of Albany, as Governor, but the Democrats were not successful in the issue of the election. For several years before his death, which occurred at Flatbush, May 16, 1877, Judge Vanderbilt was retired from active service by a shock of paralysis; but, "in the prime of his energy was certainly the most vigorous and handsome man in public or private life in this county, if not in the State. His strong, manly beauty mated with and was the exponent of qualities of mind and heart, as attractive as his gifts and graces of person. In a time when 'rings' were unknown, he was a Democrat; in a time when sectionalism was hardly an apparition, and when the State had its full rights, whether it was weighed or counted as a factor, he was a patriot, and one who gloried in his whole country; in a time when shysters had not been evolved, and when pettifoggers were limited to a satirical stage or a sarcastic literature, he was a lawyer; in a time when gentlemen were as dominant in politics, and scholars as dominant in council as they now are not, he was a scholar and a gentleman. His rapidity of public development, his activity in affairs, his not surpassed qualities of good-fellowship, the magnetism of his mind and manners, and the impressive appeal which he could address to the people, early made him and long kept him what he was fondly called, 'Kings County's Favorite Son,' when that appellation was forcible by its rarity, significant in its meaning, and when it had not been vulgarized by its application to the politicians by profession, and to the place-hunters by occupation."

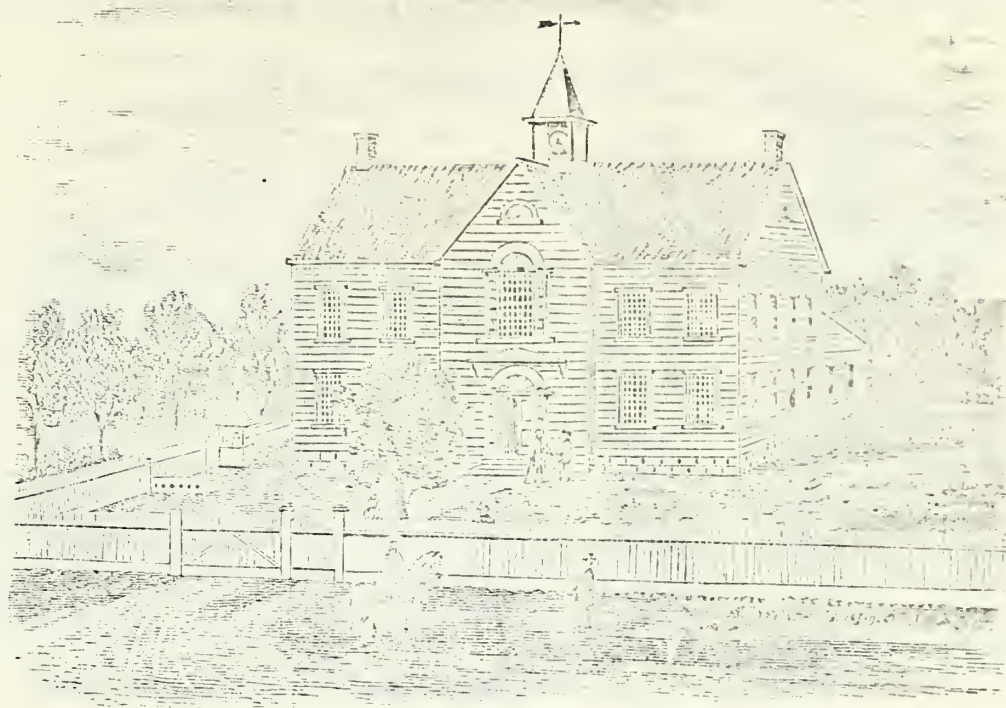
Judge Vanderbilt married Gertrude Phebe Lefferts, daughter of John Lefferts, of Flatbush. She survives him, and is elsewhere noted (pages 15 and 16) as the author of the *Social History of Flatbush*.

JOHN OAKEY, ESQ.

JOHN OAKEY, Esq., although born in Brooklyn, removed in his early childhood with his father to Flatbush, at which place he has spent the greater part of his eventful life, and is justly claimed by Flatbush as one of her representative men. He was educated at Erasmus Hall, from which institution he passed in 1845, to enter Yale College, graduating with honor in 1849. He studied law in New York city, with Hon. James Humphrey, M. C.; he was admitted to the bar in 1851, and for twenty-three years practised law in New York city; during all this period he was the Notary of the Nassau Bank; from 1857 to 1861 he was the Justice of the Peace for the village of Flatbush. When the civil war broke out in 1861, he was the first man who left Flatbush for the seat of war; he was then a member of the 7th Regiment, New York; upon his departure his wife was presented by several gentlemen of the village, with a check for \$100; and efforts were immediately made by which a village relief fund of several thousand dollars was raised for the aid of those who might go to the war. In 1866 he was elected Member of the Assembly on the Republican ticket, in a strongly Democratic district, and was returned in 1867, thus serving two years in the Assembly; during a portion of this time he was Chairman of the Committee on Commerce and Navigation, succeeding Hon. Dewitt C. Littlejohn. In 1868, he was appointed Judge

Advocate with the rank of Colonel, on the staff of Major-General Shaler, First Division, N. G., S. N. Y.; this position he held for five years, until 1873. From 1874 to 1878 he was Counsel for the Brooklyn Police and Excise Departments, and in 1878, he was appointed as Assistant District Attorney of Brooklyn and Kings County. He has been the founder of several large and flourishing amateur dramatic associations, and the President as well as founder of the Amaranth Society of Brooklyn. Through his instrumentality the late Lieut.-Commander George W. De Long, of the ill-fated *Jeannette* of the Arctic expedition, was advanced to his position of honor. He was with Col. Oakey as office boy for three or four years, and through Col. Oakey's influence with some of our prominent business men, young De Long received an appointment of a cadetship in 1861.

Of Judge JOHN LEFFERTS, mentioned on page 13, it should be further said, that as a member of the Convention of 1821 for amending the Constitution of the State, he was, with John Van Buren and others, one of the so-called "Immortal Seventeen" who refused to adopt a law conferring upon the people the privilege of choosing their own Presidential Electors, instead of allowing it to remain in the Legislature.



THE THIRD COUNTY COURT HOUSE, FLATBUSH (PAGES 10 AND 11).

The *first* County Court House, at Flatbush, erected in 1686 on the spot now occupied by the fine residence of Mr. Abraham A. Lott, was a small unpretending building, and wholly devoted to the use of the Courts; the Jail being separate from it. In the winter of 1757-'8 the Jail was burned, the Court House being saved by the energetic efforts of the villagers, who extinguished the fire by throwing snow-balls upon it.

The *second* Court House was erected soon after, and included a Jail. It was two stories high, the lower floor divided by a hall running east and west; on the south side was the jailor's room, and on the north the jail apartment—a grim and gloomy room, constructed of heavy oak plank, fastened, by wrought-iron spikes, to solid oaken timbers. Floor and doors were of the same solid construction, and the room was lighted by two grated windows opening into the common. In the second story of this building was the court-room, large and commodious for the times. During the Revolutionary war, while the British were in possession of Long Island, this room was frequently used as a ball-room. The cost of this building was £448, raised by assessment upon taxable inhabitants of the county.

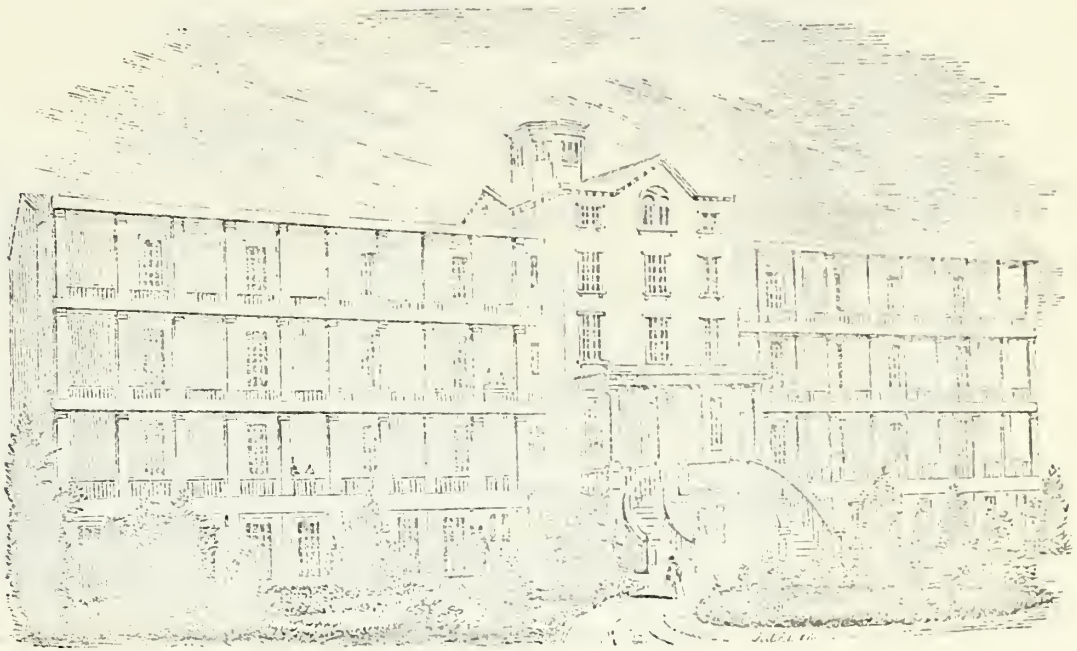
The *third* Court House was erected in 1793, in compliance with an increasing demand for greater accommodation and for an edifice more suitable to the in-

creased wealth and population of the county. This building (of which we present above a view constructed by Rev. T. R. Strong, from traditional accounts and the recollections of a few aged citizens of Flatbush) was planned by Mr. James Robinson, and erected under a committee composed of Messrs. John Vanderbilt (who resigned and was succeeded by Rutger Van Brunt), Johannes E. Lott, and Charles Doughty. The old Court House was sold at auction, and its timbers converted by the Rev. Martinus Schoonmaker into a dwelling, afterwards occupied by his son Stephen. The internal arrangement of the new Court House was somewhat similar to that of its predecessor, and its exterior was painted red. It was, however, insecure, and the frequent escapes of prisoners gave rise to the common witticism that "prisoners were in great danger of falling out of Flatbush Jail." It was burned November 30, 1832, and all Kings county prisoners, from that time until the erection of a new Jail in Brooklyn, were confined in the Bridewell of New York.

NOTE.—The *History of Kings County*, from which these pages are reprinted, also contains biographies of prominent Flatbush citizens, viz.: the Hon. John A. Lott (page 332) and Gen. Philip S. Croker (page 358), by L. B. PROCTOR, Esq.; brief biographical notices of Drs. Vanderveer (page 387) and Zabriskie (page 388), by Rev. T. R. STRONG, the author of this Flatbush History.—HENRY R. STILES, M. D., Editor "*Kings County History*," etc.

THE KINGS COUNTY INSTITUTIONS AT FLATBUSH.

The detailed history of these institutions, together with that of the *Board of Supervisors*, the *Superintendents of the Poor*, and the *Commissioners of Charities* of the County, by L. B. PROCTOR, Esq., will be found in the pages of the work from which this history is reprinted.



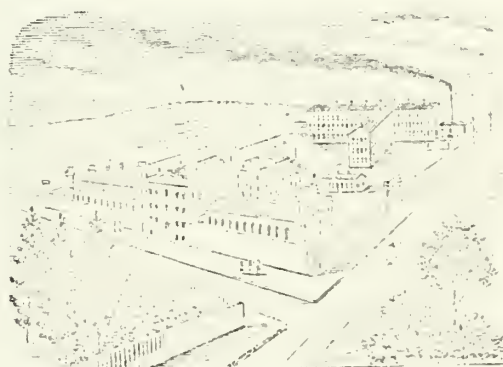
THE KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL, FLATBUSH. ERECTED 1837.



THE KINGS COUNTY LUNATIC ASYLUM, FLATBUSH. COMPLETED 1861.



THE KINGS COUNTY ALMS-HOUSE, AT FLATBUSH.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE KINGS COUNTY PENITENTIARY, FLATBUSH. COMPLETED 1853.

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